m Wolfe

THE

CHINESE SPY;

OR,

EMISSARY from the Court of PEKIN,

Commissioned to examine into

THE PRESENT STATE OF EUROPE.

Translated from the CHINESE.

In SIX VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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MDCCLXVI.

THE CHINESE SPY.

LETTER I.

The Mandarin Cham pi pi, to *the Mandarin* Kié-tou-na, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

THE meaſure of population is ſo ſmall in France, as ſcarce to contain two thirds of the nation: of twenty-five millions of inhabitants, which this monarchy ſhould have, there are ſcarce ſixteen: and, for any care the government takes, even theſe may be much reduced. So many cauſes concur to depopulation, that did not the climate ſupply France with men, it would be totally deſtitute: happily, nature here vegetates on every ſide; otherwiſe, the country would be a deſert. The natives of France may be ſaid to be rather the offspring of the climate, than the children of the community.

Religion and politics here ſeem to concur in the ruin of the ſpecies; the worſhip is every day diminiſhing it.

Five hundred thouſand of each ſex, burying themſelves, and conſequently all their poſterity, in convents, deſtroy, every century, the thirtieth part of the nation: ſo that the general extinction may be calculated before-hand; and it may be geometrically proved, that in three thouſand years, there will not be a ſingle native of France on the earth.

Religion itſelf conſpires againſt the ſtate, and makes the government commit treaſon againſt mankind; I might ſay againſt the Deity.

It is a ſcandal to human reaſon for men to conceive, that, to be eternally happy in heaven, one muſt be a ſteril burthen to the earth, and ſuppreſs the production of that iſſue which nature has implanted in us.

How could it ever come into a man's thoughts, that the Supreme Being was honoured in the extinction of his creatures, and that his greatneſs conſiſted in the deſtruction of his work?

The unity of religion cuts the ſinews of population: Chriſt's myſtical body thins France's real body. It is as if God, after his reſurrection, became man to put an end to mankind.

It is the king's pleaſure that all, who are for having children, ſhall be of his communion: ſo that thoſe French, who cannot reconcile themſelves to it, tranſplant their progeny to other countries.

The compulſion to be preſent at maſs puts them on a voluntary exile; and thus they go and live and die in other climates.

LETTER II.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

FRANCE is full of laws, regulations, and ordinances; every thing of advantage to ſociety is patronized; the only article overlooked is population.

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This,

This, though the capital branch of government, is left to itſelf: the miniſtry take no manner of thought about it, as if no concern of theirs. Here births are merely caſual, and the keeping up the ſpecies depends on uncertainties.

The examples of the wiſeſt nations, in this weighty point, have not excited the attention of the French adminiſtration. There was ſcarce a Roman cuſtom which the French have not borrowed, except their various encouragements of marriage.

Here a man may live unmarried, and thus with him dies all the poſterity he otherwiſe might have had: the government calls him to no account for it, nor is it any blemiſh in his character to have declined the legal way of giving children to the ſtate.

The ſtate of celibacy puts an end to the exiſtence of a whole generation; yet a perſon in that ſtate is capable of holding the moſt eminent poſts of the empire; his inutility ſubjects him to no fine, or diſadvantage.

Indeed, the king, who reigned about the middle of laſt century allowed a penſion to every father of twelve male children. This was beginning the encouragement where it ſhould have ended. Though generation was a proper ſubject for reward, men were not to be ſtimulated to prodigies. Every man who marries may promiſe himſelf two or three children, but is not to expect the number to which the reward is aſſigned.

LETTER III.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

FOR propagation to have its full activity, men ſhould be ſpread at certain diſtances from one another: a geometrical diſtribution ſeems of abſolute neceſſity; for all the parts of generation ſhould be correſpondent and analogous. If diviſed by ſeparate branches, it will want that general play, whence re-

ſults the elaſticity of all its ſprings. In this laſt caſe, the propagation of a people may be ſaid to be by bits and ſcraps.

Paris and many other of the principal cities of France are crouded with men, whilſt other parts of the kingdom are too thinly ſown. All the principal nobility, and perſons in high ſtations, reſide at Paris the far greater part of the year; there alſo the rich chuſe to live: and what numbers flock hither to get into buſineſs, or mend their fortunes, according to their ſeveral capacities, or views!

A very ſurpriſing circumſtance is, that this Paris, which drains all France, is continually diſpeopling itſelf: thanks to the colonies poured into it from the country, or it would become a deſert. The cauſe of this is, that too great a number of men in one place is as detrimental to population as too few.

LETTER IV.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

MORAL cauſes diſpeople France more than the political: the depravation of manners, which here bears the name of gallantry, prevents generation. The promiſcuous intercourſe of the two ſexes cramps propagation in both. He, who converſes with many women, will very ſeldom have many children; propagation, by being diſtributed, is extinguiſhed.

In France, marriage itſelf thwarts the views of population. A numerous family is burthenſome, and contracts the enjoyments of life. The end of marrying now is not to have children, but to have a wife and no children: this now a days, is called the nuptial bleſſing.

Women perceive, that pregnancy wears their beauty, and that frequent child-bearing gradually impairs their charms; on this account many forbear cohabiting with their huſbands; and ſome there are who

who never marry from a fear that it will ſpoil their complexions.

The reigning affectation in France, of being ſociable, ruins ſociety; they viſit frequently only to pleaſe the more: and this is a caſt of mind contiguous to depravation. It is not to pleaſe one ſingle woman, that men are at ſuch pains to make themſelves agreeable; their deſign is on many.

The conſequence of this general deſire is an intimacy with proſtitutes: another impediment in the way of population.

The children born here of lawful marriages are ſo few, as ſcarce to balance the number of the dead; ſo that the ſpecies is daily degenerating. Then the breed is ſo ſickly, that moſt of them die as ſoon as born; they do little more than make their appearance in the world.

Moſt married women in France have but one concern, which is, to be delivered. The ſuckling of their children does not diſturb them; this care, though the capital of all, is intruſted to nurſes, who, for a ſmall allowance, take on them to ſuckle children which do not belong to them.

Here is another obſtacle to population, for whilſt theſe creatures give ſuck, their fecundity is at a ſtand.

LETTER V.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

OF all the cauſes which diminiſh the human ſpecies, one of the greateſt is luxury; it enervates, in ſome meaſure, the general population. Thou wilt perhaps ſcarcely believe it, but war, peſtilence, and famine, put together, do not ſo much miſchief as luxury.

Since it has come to pervade all claſſes, few can afford to marry, or, if married, are not able to get children. Cloaths, diamonds, and ornaments, anticipate the extinction of poſterity.

Every appendage to this luxury hurts population. It muſt have a great number of men and maid ſervants; theſe ſeldom or never marry; which makes an immenſe void in the ſpecies.

A man with an income of forty thouſand livres every year hinders twenty births. There is not a woman of any rank in France without four or five damſels about her, who grow old, and die without iſſue. What an immenſe loſs to ſociety is this prodigious number of both ſexes, who live in a ſtate of celibacy!

The ſoldiers of France, who out number even the footmen, never marry. They who contribute to the glory of the crown, are not allowed to contribute to the power of the ſtate. This claſs of men, which periſhes by battles, and ſtill more by hardſhips and diſtreſſes, and which ſtands in need of being renewed every twenty years, quits the ſtage of life without leaving any poſterity to replace it.

As a concurrence of cauſes hinders the birth of men, ſo an infamous diſtemper haſtens their death. Debauchery has ſpread its venom through all claſſes; it has weakened nature to ſuch a degree, that it now produces only ſickly creatures, moſtly incapable of propagation. Fathers infect their iſſue, and theſe tranſmit it to poſterity. This diſeaſe may be found in perſons who have not deſerved it; may be the conſequence of their parents vices.

LETTER VI.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

THE domeſtic œconomy in France is not leſs hurtful to population than the political.

The law of each particular family checks the general propagation. Sons are not allowed to give the commonwealth children without their fathers conſent; otherwiſe the marriages may be annulled.

Children

Children are not at liberty to engender till the age of twenty five; that is, when moſt of them are no longer able, and after loſing their moſt prolific years.

The Europeans who are for reducing every thing to numbers, have calculated, that the life of man, taken in general, is but twenty years, one with another. At this rate it may be ſaid, that in France no body is to engender till three years after his death.

This law, by which fathers diſpoſe of their children's deſires, is of the very worſt conſequence to population. I mean marriages in which inclination has no ſhare; for parents only mind the fortune, without any regard to inclinations or temper.

Diſproportion of age is overlooked, provided there be a proportion of wealth. It is nothing uncommon in France to ſee a man of five and twenty married to a woman of five and forty; that is, when ſhe is almoſt paſt child-bearing.

Riches are the *primum mobile* in marriage: uglineſs and averſion, which commonly attend them, ſcarce come into account. Hence it is that theſe conjunctions in general yield ſo few children to the ſtate.

Another inconveniency of this deſpotiſm of parents is, that a father with ſix children intends only one for the marriage ſtate; for the others, there is the army, or they are condemned to celibacy; which is no more nor leſs than by his own private authority to deſtroy five generations for the ſake of one. If he has four daughters, three of them he ſhuts up in a convent, and the fourth ſhall have a huſband.

What can be thought of a government, which ſeems not to know that children belong to the republic more than to their fathers? for, though they owe their lives to the latter; for their ſafety, without which their life would have little to recommend it, they are indebted to the former.

LETTER VII.

The Same to the Mandarin Cotao-yu-ſee, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

IT was lately reported, that the favourite ſlave had been diſgraced, and that there was a vacancy in the little apartments of Verſailles. Immediately all the pretty women in Paris were on the wing. Thou canſt not conceive the buſtle on this occaſion. All that art and nature can employ in that ſex, to ſtimulate the taſte of the other, was put in practice; it occaſioned a flood of buſineſs; the milliners, and all the dailers in ornaments, ſat up whole nights: never was there ſuch a demand for ſilks, laces, ribbands, and pompoons. It was as if all the women were widows, getting ready for a ſecond marriage. They bathed and perfumed themſelves; and, to the embelliſhments of dreſs, they were for adding wit; they read over and over the moſt tender and affecting paſſages of romances, ſtudied repartees, and made extemporary compoſitions.

Till the report of the downfall of this favourite, all the women at Paris had been as well as could be, but now are ſeized with a dreadful head-ach, which ſends them to Verſailles for change of air.

Some, who knew that the firſt interview between the king and the diſgraced ſlave happened at a ſtag-hunting, would, by all means, be preſent at ſuch a chaſe, which before they had never thought of.

Several young widows, who, ſince the deaths of their huſbands, had betaken themſelves to convents, with a deſign of ending their days in thoſe devout receſſes, left them, on this vacancy, to go and ſee Verſailles once more, before they totally ſequeſtered themſelves from the world.

The main point was, to be ſeen by the monarch, and to ſpeak to him. For this end, they had recourſe to the uſual expedient of petitions. This ſtratagem

tagem had anſwered very well in the preceding reign: a petition delivered to the king by a widow, only for a penſion of fifteen hundred livres, gained her the crown of France. All theſe love-letters, as I may call them, to the monarch, began thus: *May it pleaſe your majeſty.*

The petitioners were ſet off ſo ſprucely, that with their roguiſh looks, they might well have hopes of going farther than their petitions: but, in the midſt of all their trepidations, it became known, that ſo far from a vacancy, the favourite was never more in the king's good graces. There was now no more writing of petitions, and, the head-ach ſuddenly leaving them, they returned with heavy hearts to Paris.

They, who had been ſo eager for ſeeing a ſtag-hunting, had now other thoughts; and the young widows crept away to their convents till farther call.

This is very far from being the firſt of ſuch reports; ſome ſay, it is the favourite herſelf who is the original author of them, and afterwards makes a jeſt of them with the king: a ſure ſign that ſhe is well fixed, elſe ſhe would hardly ſport thus with royal favour.

LETTER VIII.

The Same, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

A Perſon was lately put to death here for ſome paſquinades being found in his houſe. Theſe are writings againſt the government, ſet up by malcontents, at the corners of ſtreets, to inform the public of what they already know.

In France, this crime is never pardoned, as it expoſes a defect in the general management of affairs, or ſome particular fault in the miniſtry.

Other crimes admit of alleviations; not this: all the ſeverity of the law is exerted againſt it.

Public robbers, aſſaſſins, and incendiaries come off with the gallies; but a paſquinade-maker has nothing to expect but death.

An Engliſhman at Paris, growing out of conceit with life, and having not reſolution enough to diſpatch himſelf, aſked a Frenchman, how he ſhould get himſelf put to death.——————Only make a paſquinade, and that will do your buſineſs; you may depend upon being hanged.

Repreſentations to the miniſtry on the bad ſtate of affairs are conſidered as paſquinades, and puniſhed as ſuch; becauſe, ſay theſe gentlemen, it is not for private perſons to pry into public miſmanagements. The tax-gatherers then ſhould be diſcarded; theſe poſts being inſtituted only to remedy thoſe diſorders, which they make their particular concern.

It is the ſame with remonſtrances to the king; they are high treaſon in the ſtricteſt ſenſe, and ruin the ſubject irretrievably; which is juſt as if a father of a family ſhould put his children to death, for taking the liberty of laying open to him the bad condition of his domeſtic concerns.

If any private perſon has the ſpirit to give a written information to the king, the whole miniſterial tribe are in a panic; they dread the king's being informed of the miſmanagement of things, and leſt ſome ſtate-myſtery be expoſed to him: accordingly they take care that few or no ſuch memorials ever reach him; it would be over with them ſhould the ſovereign be induced, by any patriotic remonſtrance, to look into the adminiſtration. It is but t'other day that I ſaw a perſon dragged to the Baſtile for having about him ſome papers containing remonſtrances to the king: it is indeed a moſt ſeditious piece. I ſend thee a copy, that thou thyſelf mayeſt judge of it.

" Humble remonſtrances to Lewis XV. king of " France, by the moſt faithful of his ſub- " jects.

" SIRE,

" If kings be fathers of the people, the people " muſt be permitted to apply to their king; for o- " therwiſe what refuge have they in their calami- " ties? the miniſters? How! thoſe mercileſs op- " preſſive men, who ſacrifice every thing to ambiti- " on, and who have a perſonal intereſt to conceal " from the prince what is amiſs in the ſtate!

" Peter the Great, emperor of Muſcovy, allowed " his ſubjects, when aggrieved, to remonſtrate their " caſe to him, on this proviſo, that, if what they " advanced was not really true, death would be " their puniſhment. I here ſubmit myſelf to that " law; I offer to die if I impoſe on your majeſty in " any one thing.

" Yet, Sire, I do not violate the laws of the mo- " narchy: your great grandfather, of glorious me- " mory, allowed his ſubjects to apply to him. The " prince himſelf opened a way for them to the " throne, and made an avenue for their having ac- " ceſs to his preſence.

" Before I come to the point, I muſt acquaint " you, Sire, that you are adored by your people: " your excellent qualities have gained you univerſal " good-will; your clemency, your affability, the " aſſemblage of noble and amiable virtues in your " perſon, have made due impreſſion on the hearts of " all your ſubjects. There is not one who is not " ready to ſhed the very laſt drop of his blood for " you.

" The only complaint is, that under the beſt of " kings the French are the moſt unhappy of all peo- " ple.

" The misfortunes of nations ariſe from ſove- " reigns not knowing the ſtate of things. Thoſe, " whom they make choice of to aſſiſt them in ſup-

" porting

" porting the weight of their crown, have always " particular reaſons for keeping them in the dark; " and of their real ſtrength and revenues they are " moſt ignorant.

" Providence, Sire, has placed you on a throne " made to be the moſt powerful in the univerſe: " you reign over immenſe tracts; but this vaſt body " politic has loſt the uſe of moſt of its limbs. Of this " large continent only a very ſmall portion is culti- " vated; all the remainder lies fallow: you ſtand in " need of ten millions of ſubjects, which, by the " want of laws for agriculture, are not come into " being. Each generation kills a million of French. " That is, France, which ſhould be the moſt potent " ſtate in the world, is not proportionably on a level " with the weakeſt in Europe.

" Your finances are in no better condition; or, " to ſpeak the truth, ſuch is the diſorder and miſma- " nagement of the revenue, that nothing but a mi- " racle in œconomy, can retrieve it. And how is it " poſſible, Sire, that it ſhould be otherwiſe? This " part of the adminiſtration ſeems to be given up to " plunder: every financier has a key to your treaſu- " ry, and draws from it at diſcretion.

" The total of the current ſpecie in France is com- " puted at twelve hundred millions. Now for the " finances to be on a right footing, this ſum ſhould " be divided geometrically, that is, in proportion to " the number of inhabitants: yet I could name ſix " perſons, who conjunctly are poſſeſſed of four hun- " dred millions; that is, they have a third part of " the whole wealth of the nation, or the ſhares of " ſix millions of your other ſubjects, whilſt great " numbers of theſe have never ſo much as ſeen your " image on a piece of gold.

" This univerſal diſtreſs is accompanied with a ge- " neral diſcontent. France is rankled to ſee a ſet of " men fattening on the public diſtreſſes. Sixty con- " tracters have their hands continually in the poc- " kets of your other ſubjects, and every year each

" of

" of thoſe leaches draws no leſs than three hundred
" thouſand livres out of them.

" The unneceſſary wars, which wiſe councils
" might have prevented, ſtrip your people of what
" little the avidity of farmers hath left them. We
" ſink under the accumulated taxes for defraying the
" expences of romantic wars. Multitudes being ut-
" terly unable to pay ſuch impoſitions, and meeting
" with no compaſſion from thoſe who gather them,
" quit their homes to go and ſeek a livelihood in
" ſome other country: this is a double evil, dimi-
" niſhing the national ſtrength, and augmenting that
" of your enemies. The preſent war has reduced
" the ſtate to abſolute deſolation, and not one of
" your miniſters has had the courage to lay it before
" you. The lands have ſcarce any huſbandmen, the
" cultivators have periſhed in the wars. the country
" is reduced to the appearance of a deſert, and the
" towns are bare of inhabitants; your people are
" deſtitute of the very neceſſaries of nature, they
" have not ſo much as bread: yes, Sire, ſeveral
" thouſands of your ſubjects, I ſay, are obliged to
" feed on herbage, like the beaſts of the fields.

" This miſery is the more grievous, as they, from
" whom it ariſes, ſo far from taking meaſures to re-
" lieve it, are daily adding to a yoke already ſo
" galling.

" Such, Sire, is the affection we bear you, that
" we ſhould patiently ſit down under our afflictions,
" were it not for an evil ſtill greater than our afflicti-
" ons; I mean, the deſpotiſm of your miniſters, who
" aſſume an abſolute power over our lives and liber-
" ties: they are the very baſhaws of France, impri-
" ſoning and ill treating thoſe of your ſubjects with
" whom they are diſpleaſed. The priſons now ſwarm
" with Frenchmen, whoſe names never reached
" your majeſty's ears.

" They practiſe violences of all kinds on us, under
" your authority. Your name, once ſo ſweet and
" pleaſing, is become a terror. Perſons, whoſe con-
" duct cannot be ſuſpected, are dragged to priſon,

" for

" for no other cauſe, than being diſagreeable to a " placeman, or even one of his creatures.

" Our only comfort, Sire, in our calamities, is " that all theſe grievances are unknown to you, and " committed without your privity; though our " wretchedneſs is not the leſs for being unknown to " you.

" Should theſe moſt humble remonſtrances come " to your hands, numbers of your faithful ſubjects " join in an earneſt requeſt, that you will be pleaſed " to appoint an extraordinary commiſſion for en- " quiring into the preſent ſtate of France, and that " on their report, your majeſty will order ſuch re- " medies to be uſed, as the ſituation of things will " admit of."

LETTER IX.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

THE ſubject of this letter is of a piece with my laſt: there is a talk of *indicative priſons*; the plan is clever, and ſo agreeable to the French government, that I make no doubt of its taking place, from the countenance this miniſtry ever gives to excellent inſtitutions. The author is unknown, and I believe it will be beſt for him to keep himſelf ſo, otherwiſe he would very likely hanſel his inſtitution.

The memorial is directed to the firſt keeper of the priſons; that is, the miniſter who iſſues the *letters de cachet*.

" My Lord,

" The ſubjects of the moſt chriſtian king juſtly " complain, that they are every day taken up, " without knowing why or wherefore; that the in- " quiſition of this monarchy is no leſs dreadful than " that of Spain: it is ſome comfort to a delinquent,

" on

" on his being taken into cuſtody, to know the cauſe " of his detention.

" In France all criminals are huddled together in one " and the ſame priſon; which is productive of much " confuſion, both as to perſons and things. For the " prevention of the miſtakes and errors ariſing from " this confuſion, I would propoſe *indicative* pri- " ſons; over the doors of which ſhould be inſcripti- " ons, in large characters, containing the names of " the perſons in favour, who have been injured. " *The Marchioneſs's priſon; His excellency the abbé* " *de Breuil's priſon; The count St. Florentine's pri-* " *ſon; The ſecretaries of ſtate's priſon; The com-* " *miſſioners priſon.*

" Some ſmall places of confinement ſhould alſo be " built for offences againſt under ſecretaries, agents, " clerks, footmen, or chambermaids, to the above " eminent perſonages. As to a king's priſon, that " would be quite needleſs, no body being ever taken " up on his account. It would alſo be proper to " have another inſcription, ſpecifying the particular " treaſons for which the delinquents are confined; " as, *Priſoners of ſtate for ſpeaking ill of the lady* " *marchioneſs; Priſoners for high treaſon, having* " *written verſes againſt her; Priſoners for writing* " *ſongs againſt the government; Priſoners for ſinging* " *ſongs againſt the government; Priſoners for ſetting* " *ſongs againſt the government to muſic*, &c.

LETTER X.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, *to the Mandarin* Cham-pi-pi, *at* Paris.

Venice.

A Great conteſt happened lately in this republic, between two parties; and it was carried on a long time with much heat and animoſity: the queſtion was nothing leſs than, whether three men ſhould have the diſpoſal of the freedom and lives of the ſubjects?

The

The hiſtory of Europe does not afford a ſingle inſtance of any people granting ſo abſolute an authority to any three perſons, as thoſe here called the ſtate inquiſitors. It is only in Turkey that a power can be met with anſwerable to this tribunal.

In all free governments it has been a conſtant maxim, not to lodge too great a power in a ſmall body of men; for, as an Italian † politician well obſerves, *a few are corrupted with little.*

The republic of Venice indeed ſeems to have particular ſeaſons for ſuch an inſtitution. The noble families being very numerous, and ſome very powerful, who might form deſigns againſt the ſtate, a ſevere tribunal ſeems expedient for over-awing them, or ſpeedily forcing them to keep within the limits of the eſtabliſhed ſubordination. But wretched is that government which ſtands in need of ſuch an inſtrument.

Two circumſtances chiefly render this tribunal odious, the want of formalities, and the extent of its power.

Some clandeſtine informations go for authentic proofs in caſes of high treaſon. Here is no confronting of witneſſes; the perſons accuſed on ſuch bare informations are put to death, without ſeeing, or knowing their accuſers.

Three men meet in a dark chamber, and there, after ſome ſhort conſultation, ſend and take up the chief men of the ſtate, and away with them to priſon.

The firſt is contrary to the general right of every member of ſociety, whoſe liberty, in a great meaſure, lies in the formalities of the law.

The ſecond is againſt the right of the nobles, who, as the republic's eldeſt ſons, ſhould not be expoſed to the animoſity of three individuals.

A perſon, after a worthy diſcharge of the chief offices of the ſtate, and rendering important ſervices to his country, ought to be ſafe in his houſe; he ſhould

† Probably Machiavel.

ſhould be diſtinguiſhed from the worthleſs and inactive; it is a reward due from the ſtate to his virtue. This exception from the general rule is neceſſary, and equality herein may be detrimental.

All republics produce mean-ſpirited creatures, to whom diſtinguiſhed capacity is an eye-ſore. A perſon's worth draws their enmity on him; they cannot be reconciled to his ſuperior abilities. Such citizens are to be ſecured from envy. If a great man after diſtinguiſhing himſelf by eminent ſervices in the ſtate, happen to commit a ſlip, he is to be proceeded againſt with more circumſpection than a common citizen: the republic itſelf ſhould try him, and not any particular court; the life and freedom of citizens ſhould not be left to the arbitrary deciſion of a few judges.

A republic inveſting a petty court with the power of definitive ſentences, is not ſafe. Three judges are eaſily ſuſceptible of prepoſſeſſion; and, to corrupt them, it is only a few families joining intereſt, and they may be ſure of their point. For the public to be eaſy under ſuch a tribunal, it muſt ſuppoſe that theſe three perſons, to whom ſuch a power is delegated, will not make an ill uſe of it; that they will diveſt themſelves of all human conſiderations; that nothing will prevail with them to abuſe their office; in a word, that inſtead of men they will be angels.

Experience every day manifeſts, that three magiſtrates are not ſufficient for ſeeing clearly into certain ſtate affairs, eſpecially when a delinquent of eminence is to be puniſhed; for uſually they, who have plotted his ruin, take precautions, before hand, which cannot be detected by a ſmall number of judges. On this account it is, that, in all free governments, the defendant has a right of appeal from the ſentence of a common court to a higher.

But to return to the above-mentioned debate, it was decided, by a majority of votes, that the three ſtate-inquiſitors ſhould be the baſhaws of the republic, as before. In diſputes concerning the power of bodies, it is uſual to recur to the origin of them; and

and here the power of the ſtate-inquiſitors was diſcovered to be a corruption of the conſtitution, and not a neceſſary appendix to it. Such a diſcovery, which naturally ſhould have opened the eyes of the republic, only ſerved to make her ſhut them the cloſer. It was carried in favour of the inquiſitors; and, by this act, that which before was only a conceſſion, became a law.

LETTER XI.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, *to the Mandarin* Cotao-yu-ſe, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

FRENCH writers are very diffuſe about the ſeveral tribunals eſtabliſhed by the legiſlature; yet not one makes mention of the toilette-tribunal, of all the moſt abſolute, and where ſtate affairs are every day determined without appeal. The king himſelf is ſubject to its decrees, and its deciſions are the ſupreme law.

In this court courage and intrepidity are diſregarded; officers, who have cheerfully gone on the hotteſt attacks, are often confuſed, and quite out of countenance; auſtere judges, who have made a whole court tremble, are ſeen labouring under the like timid ſenſations.

Of all the ingredients appertaining to the toilette-tribunals, *the white and red* are thoſe, of which the power is moſt abſolute, and the decrees the moſt tyrannical. The Juſtinian code is of much leſs force.

The patch-box has alſo a great aſcendant there. The patches are ſmall black ſpots of a wonderful influence. Some of theſe corpuſcles, artfully placed on a woman's face, often pronounce irrevocable decrees. I have ſeen the tombs of ſeveral foplings, whoſe death was owing to patches almoſt imperceptible; for the ſmaller the atom, the greater the execution.

The power of this tribunal is not ſeen in its full force, till the riſing of the court, when art has put the

the finiſhing hand to nature, and all the batteries of charms are planted: then he, who happens to meet ſuch a face, falls a victim to it. Perhaps thou ſmileſt at this as trivial; but I muſt tell thee, that the French make a very ſerious buſineſs of it.

LETTER XII.

The Same, to the Superintendant of Religion at Pekin.

Paris.

A Great difficulty in the chriſtian religion is, to diſtinguiſh thoſe ſins, which put God in a paſſion, from thoſe which only put him out of humour; I mean deadly ſins from venial. This is the particular buſineſs of a great number of doctors, called caſuiſts. Of theſe every convent has one, and he has nothing to do but eat and drink, and ruminate on the different ways of damning one's ſelf.

Beſides the regular caſuiſts, there are others ſeculars, who offer their ſervices occaſionally; they are conſulted in all caſes of conſcience. By them a chriſtian, who has offended the Deity, is informed of the degree of his guilt: this he knows nothing of till told by the caſuiſts.

Theſe doctors may be looked on as the thermometers of conſciences, indicating their degree of reprobation. They, properly, are the judges of Chriſt's law; their office impowers them to give it what turn they pleaſe.

Theſe profound divines are of great uſe to ſociety; they can quiet ſouls, which otherwiſe would be ſtrangely diſturbed. The only difficulty is, that they do not agree among themſelves on what is technically called *the gravity of caſes*. Some are ſo difficult as to admit of no temperament; twenty caſuiſts may be tried, before meeting with one who will allow you to offend God without remorſe. Some there are indeed very tractable and indulgent.

The

The ſentences of this tribunal are given gratis; the caſuiſts make no ſale of them, condeſcending only to let them be purchaſed by preſents.

This office is very much declined, ſince ſeveral falſe brethren have laid open the ſcience of ſouls. Formerly caſes of conſcience were a ſecret, but the printing of them has made them matters of common knowledge. Sinners now peruſe them in a large dictionary, where they are placed in alphabetical order. This was a home ſtroke to the caſuiſts, as now they are little wanted. For inſtance, under the letter B. are found all the ſins relating to bigotry, beſtiality, &c. in C, whatever relates to continence and concubinage; under F, the particulars of fornication; under L, love in all its branches; and the like, to the laſt letter of the alphabet. At preſent there is not a ſinner of any diſcretion, who, among his books of impiety, has not a dictionary of caſes of conſcience.

But, before caſuiſtry was thus laid open, the profeſſors had met with a very conſiderable loſs. The kings of France formerly uſed to aſk their leave to be unjuſt; they conſulted them on the means of uſurping ſtates with a ſafe conſcience: this was very convenient for thoſe monarchs, as warranting them in a tranquil purſuit of their ambition. In time, however, theſe doctors come to be thought of no neceſſity, and were diſmiſſed. At preſent their cuſtomers are commonly weak, timorous men, fluctuating between hope and fear, deſirous of obtaining the felicity of heaven, without relinquiſhing the pleaſures of the earth.

The caſuiſts, with a view of recovering their trade, brought on the carpet, ſome time ago, a ſtriking project; it was, to prove to a very powerful ſet of men, called financiers, that their enormous wealth was wrongfully acquired, and that there was no paradiſe for them, without refunding. This was a notable puſh, and would have gained them great conſideration throughout the whole kingdom, but, unluckily for the doctors, the financiers mind neither

God

God nor devil; all their faith and caſuiſtry lie in their money.

LETTER XIII.

The Same, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

I Was lately at a houſe, where two politicians were canvaſſing the preſent war. "What a heap of "difficulties are to be leve'led, (ſaid one) to come at "a general peace! Kingdoms deſtroyed, territories "ravaged, vaſt continents ſhifting maſters, &c. Yet "a general congreſs is talked of: but how to go a-"bout it? how is the work of a general pacification "to be taken in hand?"

"I am far from denying, (replied the other) but "that the obſtacles are great and many. You may "ſay what you plea'e; but for my part, who know "the temper of negociators, I am not ſo much afraid "of the intereſts of princes, as thoſe of their miniſ-"ters. Should the congreſs ſo much talked of take "place, what would be the reſult of it? Why, the "plenipotentiaries will meet, viſit one another, talk "together, wrangle and break up.

"It is uſual for theſe gentlemen to follow, ſtep "by ſtep, the progreſs of their maſters arms: when "ſucceſsful, they ſwell with inſupportable pride. "*We have a powerful army to check your deſigns*, "ſays the haughty plenipotentiary of a ſuperior "prince to the agent of the weaker; *we'll lay waſte "your whole country, we'll deſtroy every thing by "fire and ſword.* This is their common language: "not to mention, that negociators are ſomething "while the wars laſts; whereas on the ſignature of "the peace, they become of no account.

"Though ſovereigns ſhould happen to be well "diſpoſed, and earneſtly wiſh for a general pacifica-"tion, that will not do, unleſs their miniſters are "in the like ſentiments. It ſignifies nothing for "kings to give them written inſtructions. If no de-

"bate

" bates ariſe concerning the intereſts of princes, they " will make a handle of precedency and rank; a " bench, the placing of a ſtool, ſhall very often break " off a negotiation highly beneficial to all Europe, " and bring the armies of all nations into the field " again.

" *I demand an eaſy chair*, ſays a ſcoundrel of a " plenipotentiary. *My chair is out of its rank; be-* " *fore I liſten to any propoſal of peace, I inſiſt on my* " *place; all the nations in Europe may periſh, rather* " *than I will bear any injury to the rights of the* " *crown which I repreſent. What is the right of* " *nations, and the laws of war, to my maſter's pre-* " *rogatives?*

" If theſe difficulties ſhould happen to be removed, " they ſoon ſtart others. I defy all the powers of " the earth, with all their good intentions, to give " peace to Europe, if two or three raſcally miniſ- " ters, colluding together at a congreſs, are for pro- " longing the war."

LETTER XIV.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

OUR miniſters ſaid a Frenchman lately to me, are the cauſes of all our misfortunes. Their hiſtory is that of the decline of the monarchy.

Richlieu, who governed us above a hundred years ago, was an ambitious creature, concentring every thing in himſelf. Never had ſubject a greater ſway over his maſter. He may be ſaid to have dethroned Lewis XIII. and to have ſeated himſelf in his place. He, indeed, did great things; but thoſe great things were what ſhould not have been done.

He eſtabliſhed an abſolute deſpotiſm in France: ſince that time the nation has never done any thing great; for what is to be expected from ſlaves.

Before him, there was a power in the ſtate, which was a counterpoiſe to the royalty of our kings, an hindered

hindered them from being the abſolute maſters of our lives and properties; but Richlieu ſuppreſſed it. This cardinal would have been one of the moſt famous baſhaws of the Ottoman empire; for never was a greater promoter of abſolute power. All the political ſocieties, which might in any wiſe be a check to the royal prerogative, he made it his ſtudy to aboliſh; and, as an author very juſtly remarks of this man, *had he not had deſpotiſm in his heart, he would have had it in his head.*

He was a bitter enemy to the houſe of Auſtria, and ſpent his life in ſcheming ways for diminiſhing its power; at the ſame time overlooking a little republican ſtate, then intent on forming a navy, which one day was to be ſeverely felt by France. He uſed to be writing plays, when he ſhould have been employed about building ſhips.

Mazarine ſucceeded him, a true Italian, cunning and deceitful, beſides his rapacity in ſtripping the ſtate of its riches, and appropriating them to himſelf. His miniſtry was a ſeries of crimes. He had an army at his beck, and made war at the expence of the ſtate, againſt thoſe who diſputed his authority; he threw the kingdom into confuſion, and ruined the finances.

Fouquet, who became prime miniſter after him, uſed to give entertainments to the king to the amount of ſixteen millions. Fouquet was puniſhed, but malverſation ſtill continued.

Colbert, inſtead of minding the ſubſtance, had his eyes fixed on forms; he raiſed the building before placing any ſcaffolding. Inſtead of encouraging agriculture, he promoted thoſe arts which are no more than a conſequence of it; he began at the end. His application was taken up with turning the huſbandmen into artiſans; he found France fallow, and left it uncultivated.

Louvois was made up of paſſion; his whole occupation was in revenging himſelf and Lewis XIV. This ſevere, cruel, and mercileſs miniſter, looked on mankind as the inſtrument of his ambition: it

ſeemed

ſeemed his ſupreme delight to inſtigate his maſter to carnage. His adminiſtration was all bombs and cannons. When ſieges and battles were in view, places were inſtantaneouſly ſupplied with all the murderous implements; there was not his fellow for dispeopling a monarchy.

Seignelai was too much the man of pleaſure to mind the ſtate; he was on parties of debauchery when he ſhould have been in his office.

Chamillard underſtood nothing of buſineſs; his blunders were perpetually hurting the nation. Charles XII. of Sweden, being informed of diviſions in the ſenate of Stockholm, ſignified to them, that he would ſend a boot to govern them. Chamillard governed France like a boot.

Du Bois was a bad man; his debaucheries and crimes had totally unfitted him for any ſerious application. The procuring of looſe women for the regent, his maſter, allowed him no time for political affairs; and, perhaps, it was a happineſs to the monarchy, that his depravity had ſo debaſed his genius; for, with ſuch an influence over him, who at that time governed France, he might otherwiſe have done infinite miſchief.

Law, who was put at the head of the finances, was an adventurer, determined on raiſing himſelf on the ruins of the firſt ſtate which would truſt him. This is a ſpecimen of our miniſtry's wiſdom and honeſty, to commit the moſt important part of the adminiſtration to ſuch a foreigner. The bank was a ſyſtem fit only for a republic, where the whole community are ſecurities for what is lodged in the finances; but could never anſwer in a ſtate like France, where, when there is a fund giving value to paper, paper ſoon comes to be of no value.

Fleuri, with all the qualities which conſtitute an honeſt man, had not ſo much as one of thoſe which make a great miniſter. His pedantic caſt was incompatible with the proper management of ſtate affairs; he may be looked on as the ſchool-maſter of France. He was too parſimonious to inrich the monarchy; he

he ruined it by his saving: all his views were low; he was the meanest soul that had ever occupied the body of a minister. By his niggardliness the remainder of our navy ran to ruin, when vast sums should have been laid out for its repair.

Fagon had views, but they all terminated in manufactures; like Colbert, he minded nothing but form. Manufactures were his talk by day, and dreams by night. Our placemen, for these hundred years past, think that nothing more is wanting to the prosperity of a state, than making stuffs, and encouraging arts.

Chauvelin teemed with projects; he, as it were, engendered plans, but wanted genius for striking out the means of execution. He was a downright closet-minister.

Maurepas did some services to France; he repaired the navy as much as could be, at a time when the repair was universally opposed. The continuance of the Levant trade, against all the efforts of the English, was owing to him. He set out very well, but a woman stopped him short.

I draw the veil, added he, over that flow and ebb of placemen, of whom some governed us not long since, and some still govern us; it is the picture of the debasement of ministers. It shews petty abbés become ministers of state, and made cardinals, on account of some courtly lines and pretty sallies of wit; sons and grandsons of painters, barbers and woollen-drapers, without talents or virtues, promoted to the ministry by mere favour: some, from the inspection of lanterns, have passed to the controul of the marine; others, known only among prostitutes, have had the finances committed to them; and others, after a thousand blunders as police-officers, govern the state with the like incapacity.

LETTER XV.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, *to the Mandarin* Champi-pi, *at* Paris.

Venice.

NOTHING can be more plain and ſimple than the government of this republic. No depth of invention was requiſite to the formation of it: the nobles got the political and civil power into their hands, and there it has ever ſince remained: this is the Venetian ſyſtem.

It may, in ſome meaſure, be ſaid to be without any conſtitution; for where every thing, even to the natural rights of men, is ſuppreſſed, there is properly no ſtate.

The republic, indeed, is in action; but it is only to reſtrain the power of the nobles within bounds: the eaſe and freedom of the people make no part of its care. It is general deſpotiſm, keeping a ſtrict guard againſt particular tyranny. This is the republic's great, and almoſt only buſineſs.

The commons have no repreſentative in the great council; neither ſhould they; for, being without either rights or privileges, they can ſcarce be ſaid to have any political exiſtence.

The ſenate is a body by itſelf, not connected with the ſtate, and ſubſiſts independently of the republic. All intermediate, ſubordinate, and dependent powers are aboliſhed: the clergy, the peaſantry, and the commonalty, are nothing; the nobles poſſeſs every branch of the legiſlative power. The ſame body which makes laws, enforces the execution of them, and appoints the penalties.

Some conſtitutional principle however there muſt be, and Venice is not without it: the ſenate, by continual ſhows and diverſions, draw off the attention of the people from prying into the adminiſtration.

Fear, ſuſpicion, and diſtruſt, are the baſis of this govern-

government. Venice looks on all the crowns of Europe as its ſecret enemies, and accounts its own miniſters dangerous men. Every member of the ſtate here is a ſpy over the other.

At Venice a ſtone mouth is open to all informers: one would think it, with a French author, to be that of tyranny. A man is not to ſpeak to another under pain of death. What can be thought of a government which erects the civil virtues on the ruins of the moral, and where a good citizen muſt be a villain?

Talents at Venice depend on fortune; all the poſts of the republic are caſual; when the ſtate is happy, it is well governed. There are indeed ſome dexterous gameſters, who, againſt all the oppoſition of fortune, get into poſts, dignities, &c. ſo as to become maſters of the republic, of the ſenate, and of the people; the reſult of which is, that the nobles are the tyrants of the republic, and the commonalty the ſlaves of the ſtate.

LETTER XVI.

The Same, to the Same, at Paris.

Venice.

WHAT I ſaid of Venice in my laſt muſt not lead you to think that this city is without a policy; it has a plan of government perpetuated from generation to generation. The republic was ſet a going about thirteen hundred years ago, and its motion is ſtill the ſame. The machine of ſtate has not been wound up ever ſince; ſome of the ſprings, from time to time, have occaſionally been mended, and that is all.

So accuſtomed are they here to grievances, abuſes, and defects in the adminiſtration, that, though plainly ſeen into, and publicly known, no remedy is applied.

If a citizen of parts propoſes a beneficial ſcheme, he is heard and admired, and his ſcheme allowed to be highly advantageous to the public, but not carri-

ed into execution; it being a ſtanding maxim, not to admit any thing, however uſeful, if contrary to antient errors. The Venetian policy, excludes all innovations.

I ſhould willingly come into this ſyſtem, that is, the immutability of the fundamental maxims of the ſtate, did it not claſh with the nature of the human mind.

Political ſocieties, that is, men, have no fixed point; they are never in the ſame poſition. A wiſe government, inſtead of valuing itſelf on a uſeleſs conſtancy, ſhould be ever accommodating itſelf to ſuch variations.

All conſtitutions are continually moulding themſelves into new forms; and it behoves legiſlation to follow them in its ſeveral gradations.

For a nation now-a-days to go about governing itſelf on the Greek or Roman plan would be ridiculous. Thoſe times afforded ſeeds of virtues and vices which no longer ſubſiſt.

The firſt knowledge of a government is to diſtinguiſh times; without ſuch a diſtinction every thing is confounded. Here other reflections alſo offer themſelves.

Since the revolution which followed that of the Roman empire, Europe has been without any detached ſtates; the ſeveral nations form but one family divided into different governments. The ſtates, which compoſe the chriſtian commonwealth, are linked together by a chain of political intereſts.

When great bodies change maxims, the leſſer muſt follow their example; otherwiſe, there would be a breach of order in the general power.

All the governments of Europe have made alterations in their political and civil ſyſtem, Venice alone excepted; it has always left things in *ſtatu quo*.

The reaſon given for this is, that the republic, having ſubſiſted fourteen centuries under this inſtitution, bids fair to ſubſiſt as many more. But ſtates do not totally periſh, they degenerate; and this ſtate of debility

debility is their natural death: the Romans exiſted a long time after the period of their republic.

Not that Venice is without able citizens, who, as they ſee evils, are capable of remedying them: but every age has produced a body of men attached to antient cuſtoms, always oppoſing ſalutary plans, from ignorance, and a ſenſeleſs prejudice againſt any innovations whatever. Theſe human machines, who view the republic only through the mechaniſm of its primary motion, are not competent judges of the advantages of new plans.

To leave things as they are requires no capacity; whereas, to reform inveterate evils is the taſk of great abilities; yet the old errors ſtill ſubſiſt; the uſual misfortune of thoſe governments where the deliberations go by plurality of votes; the ſtate being then governed, not by a few intelligent men, but by an ignorant majority.

LETTER XVII.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, *to the Mandarin Prime Miniſter, at* Pekin.

Paris.

EUROPE, at the time I am writing to thee, is witneſs to a ſpectacle on which the attention of the whole univerſe may be worthily employed.

France, that flouriſhing kingdom, which formerly the greateſt powers could not behold without umbrage and terror, is now become an object of ridicule.

This body, once ſo robuſt and vigorous, is fallen into a decline. The crown lands are conſiderably diminiſhed; its chief colonies are deſtroyed; it has loſt the greater part of its conqueſts. Its population is decreaſed, its navy at the loweſt ebb, its trade come to nothing, its finances exhauſted, and its large armies ruined.

A nation is never reduced ſo low without ſome internal defect, and this defect is always in the adminiſtration; for nations do not degenerate of themſelves:

ſelves: they are in one century what they were in another; their elevation or abaſement depends abſolutely on thoſe who govern them.

A ſenſible Frenchman ſaid lately to ſome politicians, who were lamenting their general impotency: How can it be otherwiſe? Would not one think that there was a kind of ſtruggle at court, to place at the head of affairs thoſe who are leaſt equal to them? If a man has ſome ſhare of wit, and his repartees are heightened by the elegance of his perſon, he need no other recommendation; theſe accompliſhments, with a little help from the women in favour, will carry him great lengths; he is made miniſter for foreign affairs. Another, when in the police, kept a ſtrict eye to the order and ſafety of the city, and took care that the foot and horſe patrole punctually did their duty: ſuch eminent ſervices, to be ſure, call for a reward; the man is made miniſter of the marine department.

Another, who, when in the ſame office, never failed being preſent at the ſeſſions of the Chatelet, has committed two or three hundred ſtreet-walkers to priſon, and baniſhed as many gamblers and pick-pockets to *Bicetre*: ſomething muſt be done for ſo valuable a perſonage; accordingly he is put at the head of the finances. Thus three men, neither of whom is cut out for his poſt, fill the three moſt important ſtations of the monarchy; foreign affairs, the navy, and the treaſury, being the main ſprings of our politics.

I am not ignorant added he, that a man may be a tolerable miniſter of ſtate, though no great conjurer: yet ſhould he be thoroughly expert at buſineſs; he muſt know all the turnings and windings, the avenues and outlets, beſides a conſummate acquaintance with the intereſts of crowns. Now all this is not to be learned late in life, eſpecially after the former part of our days has been ſpent in particulars of quite a different nature.

Wit alone will not do: without practice it rather perplexes than helps, and is a bar to proficiency in miniſterial

miniſterial abilities. I may, perhaps, ſome other time reaſſume this ſubject.

LETTER XVIII.

The Same, to the Mandarin Director of Arts and Trades at Pekin.

Paris.

I Lately went to ſee a vaſt incloſure, full of artizans, called the Gobelins, which is a royal workhouſe for painting in wool. The artiſts draw figures as big as life, and ſometimes even giants: almoſt all the ſubjects are taken from hiſtory, and may ſerve as monuments to future ages; ſo that here they may be ſaid to ſtrip ſheep, in order to dreſs up poſterity.

From this manufactory one may have an apartment hung from top to bottom with pitched battles, have the ſight of armies, and from morning to night, be in company with the greateſt commanders in Europe.

This is rather a domeſtic art, formed for the luxury of the kings of France, than a general trade ſet up for enriching the people. All the pictures finiſhed here belong to the crown. Preſents are made of them to foreign ambaſſadors, that their ſovereigns may ſee to what perfection France has brought its manufactures.

Splendid as this plan is, it gives me ſome uneaſineſs when I reflect, that the moths may diſfigure an emperor's face, or mangle the body of one of the principal perſons in the piece; as thus the annals of the world will, in future ages, be mutilated.

The ancients, for the ſpeedy repreſentation of nature, invented the pencil. The Flemings, and afterwards the French, ſtruck out this manufacture for repreſenting it by a greater number of hands.

The art of painting is multiplied *ad infinitum*: the wool muſt be cleanſed, ſpun, dreſſed, prepared, dyed a thouſand colours, to fit it for the fabric: this may be called painting at the twelfth hand. All

the foundations among the Europeans are the products of a fondneſs for novelty.

LETTER XIX.

The Same, to the Mandarin Cotao-vu-ſe, *Cenſor of the Empire, at* Pekin.

Paris.

THE public merriment is here an affair of ſtate. The government leaves no ſtone unturned to keep the nation gay and frolicſome. The civil magiſtrates make a point of it. There are more ordinances relating to the opera and playhouſe, than the weightieſt branch of the adminiſtration. That there may be a freedom of diverſion at the playhouſes, and people may laugh there as much as they pleaſe, troops are poſted in the entries, in order to ſeize any diſturbers of the public joy. Harlequin has centinels at his door, as well as the king. Such are the precautions taken againſt ſerioufneſs at the theatre, leſt it might diffuſe a gloomy appearance over the whole nation, that even all hiſſing of dull and lifeleſs actors is forbid. In a word, every thing is ſo regulated, that there is no being out of humour at the playhouſe, without contravening the king's order.

The police indeed allows of yawning ſometimes at the theatre, as otherwiſe at ſome pieces the audience would burſt.

I cannot conceive why the adminiſtration takes ſo much pains to promote the national gaiety: the French are of ſuch a merry caſt, that, inſtead of guards to prevent ſerioufneſs at the play, it would be ſufficient to put theſe words over the door of every theatre in Paris, *Laughing here*, and every one would fall a laughing at his entrance.

LET-

LETTER XX.

The Same, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, *at* Pekin

Paris.

I Am of opinion, that ſince the revival of arts, ſociety has much degenerated in Europe. In a climate naturally chearful people had nothing to do but to be merry from morning till night; and as there was but little reading, there muſt have been more talking. The theory of ſociety has in ſome meaſure abſorbed the practice. Men are too much read and not ſtudied enough. The beſt book on the world is the world itſelf. The company of books is very different from that of men; one is living, the other dead: the former gives only a ſingle perſpective; the latter offers a thouſand views In a word, the firſt is a ſhadow, and the ſecond the ſubſtance.

I ſee multitudes of people here, who, after long ſtudying the world in others, are come to be quite ignorant of it. Scarce a day paſſes without my being ſhewn ſome mandarins of a recluſe life, whoſe buſineſs is, to repreſent the manners of the age, without having any idea of it. They take from other moral writers general delineations of civil life: theſe they foiſt into their diſcourſes; but, as to the ſmaller interludes of human conduct, the *minutiæ* of deportment, which, ever connecting the capital ſcenes, form the real picture of the ſocial world, they know nothing of them

A general who had ſtudied ſieges and battles only in books, however correct or enlarged his theory in the art of war may be, would make but an indifferent commander. Here theory can by no means ſupply the want of practice; the ſeveral parts, inſtead of being only read behind the ſcenes, are to be acted on the public ſtage of the world.

This reproach, of all other nations of Europe, is leaſt applicable to the French. Society in France is continually in action; the practical book of the world

is so thumbed, that the leaves are almost worn away. Several parts of it are fallen to pieces; people are every day tearing them, whilst others are every day putting together the fragments.

The Europeans are extreme in every thing. Some nations are deficient in sociability, whilst others run into an opposite error.

LETTER XXI.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

THOU art desirous of being acquainted with the perfection to which the Europeans have brought the art of war. Know then, that time has produced a great revolution in this branch of political power.

The Romans, who conquered the world, were of all things chiefly intent on perfecting military discipline; but no succeeding nation having planned an invasion of the universe, it declined greatly: not that the nations did not continue to wage war with one another; but they fought awkwardly.

For the space of fifteen hundred years there was little regularity in military carnage, till lately a German prince set an example to all the powers, of killing methodically; and his maxims are adopted.

At present, all the European troops are dressed in the Prussian way, march in the Prussian way, exercise in the Prussian way, carry their arms in the Prussian way, encamp in the Prussian way, fight in the Prussian way, live in the Prussian way, and kill one another in the Prussian way: and Frederic, who is three years old, has taught war to all sovereigns. Thou wilt easily conceive the advantage this has given him, as it is not usual for masters to be beaten.

LET-

LETTER XXII.

The Same, to the Mandarin Cotao-yu-ſe, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

IN my former letters I laid before you the luxury of the French in houſes, furniture, and dreſs: but wouldſt thou ever have imagined, that there had been a luxury of dogs, and that a creature generally troubleſome is become an object of vanity?

I was lately at a gentleman's ſeat, who has a pack of two hundred. He himſelf was pleaſed to ſhew me the ſeveral curioſities of his manſion, and, among a great many marks of his ſplendor, did not forget his dogs.

This, ſaid he, is a family foundation. My grandfather had fifty dogs, my father as many more; and as good inſtitutions ſhould be enlarged, I keep two hundred.

Sir, ſaid I, theſe creatures muſt coſt you a great deal. No, no great matter, anſwered he; about as much as the giving a good education to three of my children, or marrying every year half a dozen country girls: but you ſee, I make a more noble uſe of my money; for nothing diſtinguiſhes the French and Engliſh nobility like a large pack of hounds.

From his dogs he carried me to his tygers, leopards, and lions; for this gentleman's beſtial luxury extends alſo to foreign animals.

This luxury did not ſpring up accidentally among private perſons, but is derived from royal example. The king of France has dogs, monkies, and elephants; and this is enough to bring kennels and menageries into vogue.

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LETTER XXIII.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, *to the Mandarin* Cham-pi-pi, *at* Paris.

Venice.

VENICE is not cut out for ſciences; entertainments and diverſions take ſuch hold of the citizens, as not to allow them leiture to be learned. They take up with a kind of eaſe and ſprightlineſs not very unlike wit. Thoſe nobles who affect the repuration of literature, have large libraries; and this here, implies erudition.

The ſtilineſs of ſchools being incompatible with the buſtle of revelry and diverſions, knowledge has been removed from Venice to Padua, which is thus become the *alma mater* of the learned Venetians; but not without ſuſpicion of ſuckling its nurſlings with bad milk; their mind, on leaving this ſeminary, being rather inflated than formed. Happily no body here troubles himſelf much about the ſciences; any other knowledge than policy now being looked upon as futile and uſeleſs.

LETTER XXIV.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi. *to the Mandarin Prime Miniſter at* Pekin.

Paris.

THERE is a ſcience, which the Europeans are ever ſtudying, and never learn; it is called the *intereſts of princes*. And certainly there muſt be ſome moral or phyſical cauſe, which obſtructs the improvements in it; more books having been written on this topic than any other; and yet it remains unknown, as if all endeavours to through a light on it, only rendered it more obſcure. The ſovereigns, who to be ſure are the ſoul of this ſcience, underſtand it ſo little, as generally to be miſtaken; and how can that

that be solved for them, which they themselves cannot solve? One thing there is, in which they are never mistaken; the desire of dominion, power, and aggrandizement: their ambition they know, but not the means of satisfying it: disadvantages they take for advantages, and generally the way they open to themselves in the pursuit of greatness, leads them to abasement. There is no set of men in Europe, who stand in greater need of tutors, than kings.

The interests of princes have no fixed and permanent point; the variations are so infinite, that fancy, with all its activity, cannot trace them. An unforeseen treaty, a new alliance, an invasion, a death, a marriage, the birth of a prince, a siege, a battle, produces a total change. The former combinations are antiquated: new ones must be struck out; and these will be soon superseded by others.

In order to understand the interest of princes, they should be defined; it should be shewn in what they consist. But, after all, the best stroke of policy concerning these interests would be to stop the wheel. Did princes once agree on this word, their procedure would be very different from what they are. It is now some centuries since the cabinets of Europe have set on foot intrigues and negociations for knowing these interests; and they are not yet aware, that they themselves are labouring to perplex them!

LETTER XXV.

The Same, to the Mandarin, Cotao-yu-se, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

PARIS is a mere common sewer. This city is full of ordure. Profligacy, debauchery, and infamy, run down through every part of it as a torrent. Thirty thousand courtezans rise every morning to prostitute themselves; and by evening above sixty thousand citizens have debauched themselves with them. Thus here are a hundred thousand members of the state daily corrupted. And this is not all; such a tole-

a toleration authorizes other women, who have ſome remains of virtue, to abandon themſelves to guilt; ſo that here incontinence is a general vice.

The reaſon given is, that profeſſed courtezans are deſpiſed. But that is not ſufficient; they ſhould be baniſhed out of ſociety.

The courts of juſtice, and the chiefs of the legiſlative power, ſpend their lives in forming regulations for maintaining a good police. Now it is ſurpriſing, that it never came into their minds to make any againſt this vice, of all others the moſt peſtilential to civil order, as, otherwiſe, the beſt inſtitution muſt become corrupted. There are laws indeed againſt public licentiouſneſs; but they are not put in execution, and that's the ſame thing as having none.

Did we tolerate ſuch corruptions in China, our beſt laws would be to no purpoſe, and our government, from being the wiſeſt in the world, would ſoon run to ruin. If any thing upholds that uniform order among us, which is the admiration of the univerſe, it is the particular care taken among us to prevent debauchery. Among a multitude of cauſes, which hinder the prevention of theſe vices in France, there is one, which alone is ſufficient to encourage them; I mean, that the great are the firſt in protecting debauchery.

Here incontinence finds an aſylum at the very foot of the throne: it is not to be extirpated without making a breach on the ſacred prerogative of kings; an attempt above the force of laws, and the juriſdiction of the courts erected for the maintenance of morality.

LETTER XXVI.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

PARIS has diverſions, at which one cannot be preſent without having the imagination ſullied. Guilt is exhibited ſtark naked; they are not ſo much

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as at the pains of throwing a ſlight gauſe over it. Such is a medley of ſongs and dances, called the *comic opera*, but which I look upon to be the moſt ſerious ſpectacle in the nation; for certainly nothing is leſs comic to a ſtate, than the corruption of its manners.

Such a croud of obſcenities can ſcarce be got together in one place, and ſo great a number of ſpectators of both ſexes to hear ribaldry. This opera is never empty, and at the exhibition ſo thronged as almoſt to ſtand on each other's heads. The proprietors every day refuſe money, ſo great are the numbers preſſing to ſhare in this theatrical licentiouſneſs.

Meaſures have been taken for ſuppreſſing this dangerous diverſion; for the French government does ſometimes remember, that a people ſhould not be totally without virtue; but ſtill it ſhoots up again from its aſhes, ſo that one would think the comic opera to be a neceſſary evil at Paris. I myſelf was carried there by the croud. As all Paris at preſent knows me to be a Chineſe, I obſerved the company had their eyes fixed on me to ſee how I liked it; but my looks, and ſome motions, plainly ſhewed that I heartily deſpiſed it. However, the very next day the following letter was brought to me: it is from an undertaker of ſhows, who would ſet up a comic opera at Pekin: I ſhould indeed have committed it to the flames, but I ſend it thee to laugh at.

" Mr. CHINESE,

" I am the cleverest fellow in Europe for raiſing a " company of actors, and exhibiting entertainments " of ſinging and dancing. All Paris can tell you " that I have done wonders this way. About twen- " ty years ago I fleeced the city of Lions with a " company of actors and actreſſes, who were only ſo " many moving images. I broke indeed; but that " very thing is a proof of my addreſs. I am the re- " former, and in a great meaſure the founder, of the " famous comic opera at Paris. This is one of the " fineſt monuments of our age; and a ſtatue would " have

" have been already erected to me, oppoſite to the " theatre of St. Lawrence's fair, had not the looſe " wenches, which one cannot do without in theſe " performances, put the public more out of humour " by diſtempers, than they had diverted it by their " ſongs and dances. This a little affected my fame, " and has hitherto ſuſpended the ſculptor's chiſell.

" I am poſſeſſed of another ſuperior talent; I carry on theatrical enterprizes without money. I was " quite pennyleſs, when about twelve years ago, I " raiſed a company to go for England, and prevailed on twenty actors to croſs the ſeas without giving " them a farthing. Now, Mr. Chineſe, did you " know the eagerneſs of your players after money, " you would look on this paſſage of my life as a prodigy of dexterity. Indeed, ſome time after my " arrival in Great-Britain, theſe ſcoundrels took the " law of me, and had me thrown into priſon: ſtill " I had duped their avarice, by drawing them in ſo " far as to croſs the ſeas.

" My views have always been general: on the period of my Engliſh ſcheme, I was for erecting a " French playhouſe in America, but dropped it on " being aſſured that the ſavages of thoſe countries " had no taſte for dramatic exhibitions.

" I then turned my eyes towards Japan, and was " actually collecting a troop, with a full reſolution " to undertake the voyage. Here again a Dutchman informed me, that there we ſhould all be " burnt, from an apprehenſion of the government, " that French comedians might introduce the chriſtian religion into the empire. Stupid creatures! " they muſt know little indeed of our actors and actreſſes: it would rather be an effectual way for " keeping it out.

" Being informed that the emperor of China encourages arts, and is particularly fond of public " ſpectacles, I would by your means, propoſe to your " court the erecting a French theatre at Pekin, for " acting comic operas twice a week; ſuch as, *The*

" *Servant*

" *Servant Miſtreſs*, *The Village-Cock*, *Blaze the*
" *Cobler*, and other pieces; with which the empe-
" ror, and the Chineſe people, would be highly di-
" verted. Some difficulty, perhaps, might be made
" about the language; but I have acted *Timon the*
" *Man-hater*, *The Plague of Riches*, and *The Prodi-*
" *gal Lovers*, at London, before Engliſhmen who
" knew nothing of French, and ſeemed neverthe-
" leſs to underſtand every word. If you will pro-
" mote this ſcheme, and bring the emperor to erect
" a French playhouſe in the capital of his empire, I
" will give you and your wives tickets to come in for
" nothing, during the whole time it ſhall contin-
" nue.

" I aſk no money before-hand; all I deſire is,
" that you will furniſh me with a hundred thou-
" ſand crowns, for the charges of the voyage."

LETTER XXVII.

The Same, to the Mandarin Director of Trade, at Pekin.

Paris.

HERE are men, called bankers, who make themſelves ſervants to the mercantile claſs: all the buſineſs of theſe folks is to be paying money; they are the public caſhiers of trade, ſpending their lives in telling over ſpecie: they have every body's money, and only return what was committed to them; and ſo little do they take for the trouble of doing your buſineſs, that one cannot help being obliged to them for their agency.

The high-way of remittance, is not that which brings in the moſt money to them; there are little by-paths which turn to much better account: here lies the great work of their profeſſion: the more expert they are in theſe windings and mazes of bankerage, the more aſtoniſhing their fortune.

If theſe people are neceſſary in one reſpect, in another they are very hurtful. A perſon who intends

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to quit his country, but at the ſame time to carry off all his fortune, applies to one of theſe bankers, who remits him his whole ſubſtance on a piece of paper; which is immediately paid him in the country to which he is withdrawn. Thus they are inſtrumental in depriving the ſtate of a wealth which appertains to it by nature. Bankers ſhould not be allowed, but looked on as receivers, enabling men of evil intention to impoveriſh the commonwealth.

LETTER XXVIII.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, *to the Mandarin* Champi-pi, *at* Paris.

Venice.

I Was preſent the other day at a moſt pompous marriage, though very diſproportionate. A mortal, about five feet and a half in height, married an element ſix thouſand leagues in length; the doge of Venice eſpouſed the ſea; the whole body of this ſtate aſſiſted at the nuptials, and, by the ſplendor of their equipage, did great honour to the new-married pair.

Though polygamy be forbidden among chriſtian princes, the doge of Venice is allowed to marry, every year, a ſecond time. He is alſo, with all his marriages, allowed to be impotent; and well is it for him; for, were he to lie only one night with his bride, his connubial bed would be his grave. In ſhort, to conſummate the marriage, the doge muſt be thrown into the ſea; whereas now they throw only a ring.

Though the day of this princely marriage be fixed, it is not always performed on that day. The winds and ſtorms ſometimes put off the celebration; for, ſhould it be ſolemnized when the bride is in an ill humour, ſhe might ſwallow him up in the proceſſion to the ceremony.

If the appointed day be favourable, his moſt ſerene highneſs goes on board a ſhip gilt all over with gold,

gold, and marries this element in the preſence of the ſenate, and amidſt the acclamations of numberleſs multitudes, who flock from all parts to be preſent at his wedding.---I would have all ridiculous cuſtoms put an end to.

The reaſon given for this ceremony is, its being a commemoration of the ſovereignty which the Venetians formerly had over the ſea; but this ſovereignty has long ſince ſeen its period: to what purpoſe do they keep up the figure when the reality is no more?

LETTER XXIX.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, *to the Mandarin* Cotao-yu-ſe, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

THERE is another luxury in France, and a very brittle one; that of porcelaine: it is alſo th moſt coſtly that ever human vanity invented.

I am concerned for the people here, to think, that the leaſt ſhock of a cat, with one ſtroke of its paw, may utterly ruin a whole family. We formerly ſupplied France with this luxury; but being at a great diſtance, and vanity impatient in its demands, porcelaine manufactories have been ſet up at Paris. Vincennes and St. Cloud are become the China of France; and it is their buſineſs to ruin it. At preſent, all may the more eaſily gratify their taſte in this luxury, it being every where to be had within a door or two.

It is affirmed, that about the middle of the laſt century a porcelaine bowl with a few plates, was magnificence; and a magnificence only ſeen among the princes of the blood, and the firſt quality; now nothing is more common. Porcelaine is to be ſeen among mechanics: but the conſequence of this has been general indigence; for, in a nation where the the government does not regulate the deſires of the people, and public vanity ranges at large, luxury and poverty

poverty will always go together; and, among other evils, propagation is hurt by it.

I have been ſhewn, in a nobleman's houſe, a china repreſentation of our emperor's nuptials, ſet up in an apartment which coſt one hundred thouſand livres: but they who are acquainted with this nobleman's affairs, ſay that this china marriage hinders that of two of his daughters.

LETTER XXX.

The Same, to the Mandarin Preſident of the Sciences at Pekin.

Paris.

LITERATURE is eaſily acquired in France. You read over a folio in half a ſheet of paper. There are people at Paris, whoſe livelihood it is to peruſe great works, and publiſh them in little: theſe laborious miniſters of the public idleneſs are called reviewers.

On the publication of a book they immediately run through it from the beginning to the end, making extracts by the way. This is not done in order to be judges of it; for ſentence is already paſſed; they know before-hand the works they are to praiſe, and thoſe on which it behoves them to exert their criticiſm. Their pen is, as it were, ſecond in command, being ſubordinate to the money of booksellers and authors, whoſe books are ſet forth according to the reward given them; and this is in proportion to the magnitude of the work. The panegyric of a folio is rated higher than that of a quarto; and this coſts more than an octavo: a regulation quite neceſſary, as otherwiſe a paultry ſcribler in twelves might make as much noiſe in the world, as the author of a folio in royal paper.

This diſburſement, however, is no abſolute preſervative againſt cenſure; for the number of the Paris reviewers being too great to purchaſe the applauſe of them all, the majority think they have a right to

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ery down a book, when no money has been given them to recommend it. Thus nothing is more common, than for a work to be praiſed in one journal, and vilified in another.

Thou wilt perhaps think the deciſive judges of literature to be men of extenſive knowledge and ſuperior genius. Nothing leſs: when a writer has miſcarried by ſome pamphlet, his ſhift is, to turn journaliſt.

Then, inſtead of expoſing his productions to cenſure, he criticiſes thoſe of others. This indeed is of one advantage to the public, as, inſtead of being wearied out by voluminous originals, it is only plagued with lame abridgments.

LETTER XXXI.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, *to the Mandarin* Cham-pi-pi, *at* Paris.

Venice.

IN this city are four devout ſhows, which draw a great reſort. Theſe are religious communities of young women worſhipping God muſically: they act ſeveral times every week; and the price is far ſhort of the opera or comedy, ſo that this pious entertainment may be had for a trifle. Each of theſe theatres is diſtinguiſhed by its kind of muſic: the *Pieta* adores God with the fiddle; the *Mendicanti*, with the flute; the *Hoſpitaleto*, with the flageiet; and the *Incurables*, with the timbrell.

The laſt is more in vogue than the others. Its pit, I mean the church, is always full; there is no getting in, unleſs one comes very early.

Farther, the actreſſes, in theſe four devout performances, are leſs diſſolute than thoſe of the profane theatres: their manner of living gives leſs offence, been ſeen only through a grate: their directors alone can give them leave to go out; and to this privilege they add that of corrupting them.

LET-

LETTER XXXII.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, *to the Director of Commerce at* Pekin.

Paris.

IN China every trader is the head man in his buſineſs; whereas, in Europe, he is only the ſecond. A ſet of men called agents, or 'change brokers, do your buſineſs; they are perpetually on the wing to enrich you, with little or no trouble to yourſelf. Every morning they give you notice of the courſe of exchange, and the current price of goods; they make purchaſes for you, tranſact ſales of your effects, and digeſt the agreements, ſo that nothing remains for you but to ſign.

Theſe people would be of great uſe in trade, did not they themſelves cramp it; but this induſtry of theirs enhances the price of the commodity, which diminiſhes the vent, in proportion to the tax laid on it: for conſumption always keeps pace with cheapneſs. Two or three hundred of theſe jobbers, diverting a conſiderable ſum to their private profit, the general advantage muſt thereby be greatly diminiſhed.

No body at Paris, or in moſt of the cities in this kingdom, can practiſe agency or brokerage without the king's licence; the privilege of raiſing ſuch a contribution on trade is purchaſed from his majeſty.

LETTER XXXIII.

The Same, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

AUTHORS are very ſcarce in France: not that the kingdom is in want of book-makers; never did it abound ſo much in writers; but ſmall is the number of thoſe who deſerve that appellation.

Thou wilt be amazed to hear, that this kingdom, with the name of being that where letters moſt flouriſh,

riſh, has, at preſent, no more than two authors of repute: one is called Monteſquieu, the other Voltaire; and in their works are many exceptionable things.

It will be ſome concern to poſterity, that the moſt famous of the two has compoſed only a political romance. *The Spirit of Laws*, his chief production, is a work purely ideal. It is adapted to no one nation in Europe, and ſtill leſs to the age in which it makes its appearance.

The author defines the three forms of government, and ſays, that one is founded on virtue, the other on honour, and the third on fear: but he ſeems to forget that all conſtitutions have varied from their principles, and that they now reſt on another foundation than he aſſigns to them.

To explain the ſpirit of laws, which he undertakes, theſe laws ſhould be in their vigour. Now the ſtates of Europe are leſs governed by laws, than by the corruption of laws.

Another defect in this work, and with which European writers are ſeldom chargeable, is being too laconic. The author forgets words, and mentions only things; which, for want of words, often happen to be obſcure, and ſometimes unintelligible. I allow preciſion to be the principal part of diction; but, if I may be permitted the expreſſion, it ſhould not be over preciſe. Let expreſſion have its meaſure: a thought, by too conciſe a turn, is maimed; and diffuſeneſs relaxes its energy. For an author himſelf to underſtand what he is writing, is not the thing; he muſt likewiſe be underſtood by others.

Voltaire, on the other hand, is ſterile in regard to things, having only made books for the ſake of words. This writer has a magazine full of aſſortments of choice terms. It is the beſt manufactory of phraſes of any in Europe. He has carried the colouring of expreſſion to the higheſt perfection attainable in literary painting. Dazzled by the luſtre of his varniſh, his readers forget that he is miſleading the preſent and future ages by fictitious narratives.

Take

Take away from his writings the cadence of the words, and turn of the phraſes, his books would be reduced to mere blank paper.

Something is wanting in all his compoſitions; not one of them is finiſhed; that which is moſt ſo is the very piece that is looked on to be the moſt impious.

I might alſo mention a third author, called John James Rouſſeau, whoſe reputation begins to ſpread; but as yet he only gleans, in compariſon of the two former; and the diſtance he has to travel over, before he reaches them, is ſtill immenſe. James is a thouſand leagues behind Monteſquieu, and wants five hundred to be up with Voltaire.

After Rouſſeau, or before him, is a fourth writer, who has written a book called the *Mind:* but this mind had like to have done for the author's body, for he was very near being ſent to the gallies. The parliament of Paris took the matter in hand, and ſeemed to be highly offended at the maxims contained in it. The author was obliged to make a public acknowledgment that his mind wanted common ſenſe; and this acknowledgment proved more agreeable to truth, than the title of the work; for I put the book in a crucible, and after the operation, nothing remained but a *caput mortuum*.

LETTER XXXIV.

The Same, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, *at* Pekin

Paris.

AN immenſe dictionary is on foot here: the bookſellers concerned in it ſay that it will contain all the ſciences: accordingly it is called *Encyclopædia*, from a Greek word ſignifying *univerſal*. Five or ſix men, who know but little, are to fill it with knowledge. Every leaf will be fraught with taſte and erudition: there will be only genius wanting.

The *Encyclopedia* being reckoned not very orthodox, according to chriſtian morality, was at firſt ſuppreſſed;

ſuppreſſed; but it is now ſome time ago ſince it made peace with religion, and came to terms with heaven. The impreſſion was allowed to go on, on condition that the government ſhould feign not to perceive it. This is a fetch of the miniſtry, that they may not be blamed for any impieties and hereſies publiſhed in the kingdom.

The different ſciences of the human mind are to be arranged in a grammatical order, and the whole erudition of Europe diſmembered alphabetically. If there are letters more barren in literature than others, ſo much the worſe for the purchaſers. Were this new work to be ſold by numbers, I ſhould be a purchaſer for the letter C. I am perſuaded I ſhould meet with ſuch abſurdities in the article of China, as would afford me my money's worth of laughter.

Dictionaries are now very much in vogue all over Europe, and eſpecially in France: this perhaps accounts for the decline of ſciences, ſuch books being very defective libraries; they are compoſed of ſcraps, gathered here and there, and ſerved up in method: a ſcholar, who has a dictionary ranged alphabetically in his head, knows a great many uſeleſs things, and is ignorant of more that are neceſſary.

Should ſome European bonze go about introducing this method of inſtruction in our empire, I hope it will not be permitted.

If our claſſic authors contract the *cacoethes* of dictionary-making, China would ſoon ſee an end of ſubſtantial knowledge. Inſtead of all the ſciences being contained in one book, one book ſhould contain but one ſcience. In this mingling of knowledge, after ſpeaking of God, one comes to ſpeak of Gog; which confounds all ideas, and cuts the thread of reflection. A mind, once habituated to theſe ſudden tranſitions, becomes unfit for that methodical and connected ſtudy, neceſſary to the abſtract ſciences.

A converſation, in the manner of a dictionary, would be ridiculous; and our reading ſhould never be different from our diſcourſe.

LETTER XXXV.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

SOME governments in Europe are oddly conſtituted; their principles are the pleaſure of the ſovereign. In theſe countries there is no appeal from *I will have it ſo; this is my order; or, ſuch is our good pleaſure.* Theſe words, when once pronounced, decide a buſineſs finally.

Did the kingdom lie at ſtake; were the total deſtruction of the people to be the conſequence; the ſentence muſt take place.

The reaſon given for it is, that words were invented to avoid the uſual tedioufneſs of deliberations. Indeed, *I will have it ſo*, is much more expeditious than calling together a council of wiſe men to know whether we ſhould will to have it ſo. Theſe words ſilence all argument, and, though they carry nothing ſatisfactory, every body muſt be ſatisfied with them.

Should the king enter into a war againſt the intereſt of the nation; ſhould the lives of five or ſix hundred thouſand ſubjects be thrown away on a mere nothing; ſhould all the riches of the ſtate be ſwallowed up by it, and the people brought to incredible diſtreſſes; on being aſked the reaſon of a conduct ſo contrary to the law of nations, and the welfare of the ſubjects, his anſwer is, *It is our good pleaſure.*

If generals, who know nothing of war, are put at the head of armies, fighting battles when they ſhould be laying ſieges; haraſſing the troops, in marching and countermarching, inſtead of directly attacking the enemy; in ſhort, ruining every thing by their private quarrels: if able miniſters are removed, and bunglers put into their places; this is another effect of *good pleaſure.*

If the principal poſts of the monarchy are filled by men void of capacity; if all employments are ſold, and not obtained by ſervices or abilities, but by money only; theſe things muſt be ſo, becauſe they are his his *good pleaſure.*

I know of no government on the earth, more wretched

wretched than that founded on the pleaſure of one mortal; which cauſes the grief of all others.

In every tribunal of the ſtate of which I am ſpeaking, is kept a writing in Gothic characters. The title of it is, *Political and Civil Conſtitution of the Monarchy*. I have read it over from the beginning to the end, and find, that the preſent adminiſtration is a direct contradiction to it. The king knows nothing of ſuch a book; I do not believe any one of his ſubjects ever ſpoke to him of it in his whole life. Here is a repreſentative body called parliament, and ſaid to be inſtituted to maintain the rights of the people, to hinder them from being oppreſſed, and to oppoſe any undue ſtretch of the ſovereign's prerogative; whereas if it preſumes only to make any remonſtrances, it is diſſolved, or baniſhed, and not allowed to return till it will do as it is bid. This body is ſaid to have the keeping of the laws; but that cannot be; for what does not exiſt, cannot be kept. The laws of this monarchy, notwithſtanding what is ſaid in the *Conſtitution*, are in the prince's head; and the parliament has no maſtery over his head. One evident proof, that the laws are in him, is, that he can, of his own authority, or full power, abrogate all the former laws, and ſubſtitute others in their ſtead, as ſeems beſt to his *good pleaſure*. No body of men muſt offer the leaſt oppoſition.

The European politicians, who, I apprehend, always ſpeak of what they do not underſtand, are for giving a temperament to this arbitrary power. They ſay, that the intermediate and dependent powers conſtitute the nature of this government; but, when this is known, nothing farther is known, than that here the government is deſpotic; theſe dependent intermediate powers ſo thoroughly depending on his will, that he can diſpoſe of them as he pleaſes. They add, that this ſtate is governed by fundamental laws; but it is not ſo; for theſe laws, to be fundamental, ſhould be invariable, which they are not. Theſe laws, continue they, ſuppoſe mediate channels, through which the regal prerogative flows. There

can be no fixed channels in a ſtate, where the prince's power roves at random, and his deſpotiſm takes what courſe it pleaſes

No nobility, continue theſe politicians, no monarch. In France there is a monarch and no nobility; I mean no body of nobles to balance the prerogative. The king is the maſter of the lives and fortunes of his ſubjects. He may put to death both the meaneſt and higheſt. His power is not to be withſtood by any body, either political or civil, ſince he has in his hand the ſtrength of the ſtate; I mean, the military; and, if he does not always make an ill uſe of it, it is becauſe the exertion of his whole power may not always ſuit his intereſt.

Things in their primary origin, might be as politicians repreſent them; but they are degenerated: at preſent, the prince's will turns the ſcale on which ſide he will; and, if he meets with any reſiſtance, he forces it down. The great bodies, as thoſe of the parliaments and nobility, have loſt all their privileges. The progreſſes of deſpotiſm ſhould have been gradually oppoſed; the king's ſhould have been followed ſtep by ſtep; eſpecially the army ſhould never have been at their diſpoſal; for force is always a temptation to injuſtice.

Politicians, are not agreed about the beginning of corruption, whether it was the ſovereigns who firſt corrupted the ſubjects, or, whether the ſubjects themſelves furniſhed them with the means of corrupting; but, from whatever quarter corruption came, it is certain that it exiſts, and that it brought in abſolute power.

There is, at preſent, ſcarce any viſible difference between this government and that of Conſtantinople: the king of this people, and a ſultan of the Turks, are equal in authority, and alike deſpotic. The late French monarch uſed to ſay, that, of all the governments in the world, he liked that of the Great Turk the beſt; he praiſed what he delighted in.

LET-

LETTER XXXVI.

The Same, to the Mandarin Cotao-yu-ſe, *at Pekin.*

Paris.

THE other day I ſaw, at an aſſembly, a gentleman, who ſeemed mightily pleaſed with himſelf, and not without reaſon; for all the fair ſex think him an Adonis: indeed he has all the qualities which ſuperlatively pleaſe them; for, beſides his pretty ſimper, fine teeth, and ſinging ſome catches, he has always at hand a ſet of light and pleaſant ſtories for the entertainment of the ladies.

He is ſo charming in himſelf, that, excluſive of his other talents, he can talk four hours together, without any one's perceiving him to ſteal from himſelf: he is, beſides, poſſeſſed of the characteriſtic accompliſhments which moſt powerfully attract the ladies eſteem, being an arrant coxcomb

I am at a loſs, why the men here ſo much lay to heart the ſlights of women: I ſhould rather think them matter of vanity, as at leaſt proving, that they are exempt from thoſe petty qualities, with which the great ones are almoſt always found incompatible.

A woman is diſtinguiſhed in a town for her beauty and other accompliſhments. Several perſons of character and real merit pay their addreſſes to her; but they are ſcornfully rejected, whilſt a pert ſhittle-brained coxcomb ſhall gain her at once.

When I am told, that a man has miſcarried in his addreſſes to a woman, and that ſhe, inſtead of cloſing with his honourable offers, ſcarce treats him with common civility; I immediately conclude him a man of merit: I could even carry the inference farther, and add that his merit is the very cauſe of his miſcarriage.

Virtue and merit are naturally accompanied with modeſty, which obliges him to be upon his guard; whilſt the conceited coxcomb launches out at ran-

dom, into jokes and trifles; the former obſerves a decent reſerve; the latter is free and merry, and conſequently will always get the better with women. I do not ſay but this rule has a great many exceptions; it is however the general rule.

LETTER XXXVII.

The Same, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

A Set of people, called politicians, are at open war here. I was lately preſent at one of their battles, which happened in the Thuilleries. It began at ten in the morning, and laſted till one in the afternoon.

The French differ among themſelves about the greatneſs of their power. Their exceſſive conceit in other reſpects is, with many, deficient in this point. Whether it be levity, whim, or party-ſpirit, it is certain, that the other powers, now at war with this monarchy, are not without their partiſans in the midſt of Paris.

The King of Pruſſia is very powerful in France; I queſtion whether he is ſtronger in his own dominions. The houſe of Auſtria has likewiſe its champions; and no ſmall number declare for England or Ruſſia. Thus here are four different parties always armed, that is, with ſome news-paper.

A courier lately arrived from Germany, with tidings, that a general of the empreſs-queen's had made a Pruſſian corps of ſixteen thouſand men priſoners of war. On this, the party of the Auſtrian news mongers exulting, diſpatched away ſome of their light troops to the Thuilleries, to reconnoitre the ground, and ſee whether there were not ſome forces of the oppoſite party, whom they might engage.

On theſe occaſions, it is uſual to ſend out a newsmonger to public places with a letter in his hand; which, after getting a crowd about him, he reads an

an emphatic accent. The Pruſſian and Engliſh intelligencers were in ſuch a conſternation, that, inſtead of ſhewing themſelves, they lurked behind the trees which formed the great walk in this garden. Here they precipitately held a council of war, in which it was determined, it being the beſt thing they could do, to deny the fact; that is, to aver, that the taking of ſixteen thouſand Pruſſians was only one of their adverſaries political lies.

Now hoſtilities began: a body of Pruſſians, iſſuing from an ambuſcade, fell on a detachment of French, and broke it, by dint of invectives. The Auſtrians, ſeeing their allies the French in diſorder, haſtened to aſſiſt them.

In the mean time, the Ruſſians, who had never been of any account in the Thuilleries, by reaſon of the ſlowneſs of their operations in Germany, joined in the fray. Now the action was become general: invectives, abuſes, bravadoes, curſes, inſulting expreſſions, reſounded on every ſide; and, as in party diſputes words ſoon led to blows, they fell to ſcuffling, and fought with the utmoſt animoſity.

A knight of St. Lewis received, on this occaſion, a kick on the ſhin, which lamed him for ſeveral days; a lawyer of the French party, was beaten to mummy by a Pruſſian; a zealous ſtickler of prince Ferdinand's army threw off the wig of a preſident *à mortier*, who was bawling in defence of the houſe of Auſtria, and ſent him away bare-headed, like a criminal doing public penance; an abbé, aſſerting that one Pruſſian would beat two Frenchmen, was ſeverely pummelled by a French invalid officer, with only one arm.

The news-mongers on the Engliſh ſide diſtinguiſhed themſelves greatly, and, like the brave Britons, whoſe cauſe they maintained, vigorouſly dealt about their fiſticuffs. In a word, the conteſt being for repriſals, in compenſation for the capture of a body of troops, the Engliſh and Pruſſians were ſo alert in their attacks, that they made priſoners a body of French and Auſtrians with ſome Ruſſians among them; not releaſing

leasing them till they gave their parole, that they would not speak a word of the king of Prussia till the war was over. The capitulation was signed at the military coffee-house, in St. Honore's-street: thus ended this memorable action, in which, whatever blows were given, little or no blood was shed.

LETTER XXXVIII.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

BESIDES the four ministers who direct the French government, there is one at the helm of literature; and this branch is not the least troublesome: for to regulate authors, and pronounce sentence on their writings, is no slight affair.

A minister must be especially watchful against smuggling, the republic of letters being a country swarming with cheats and pilferers.

Assistance being absolutely necessary for so laborious an employment, this minister has twenty four deputies, called censors, without whose knowledge, or assent, no book is to be printed Their department is the human understanding: they have the general jurisdiction of genius; all who are for travelling in the republic of letters must take out passports signed by them. They grant licences to authors for acquiring reputation.

This court of genius consists of several committees, who have their respective provinces. Imagine not, that these censors are persons of any extraordinary erudition, or judgment. The case is this: when a smatterer in literature has incurred the ridicule of the public by the fertility of his productions, he makes interest for a censorship; then behold him, at once, a professor of genius, and a supreme judge of sciences he does not understand.

Besides the ignorance of these committees, the far greater part of the judges are either prejudiced or venal.

nal. Every bookſeller has two or three penſioners in this literary court, who ſet their *Imprimatur* to all his manuſcripts.

This foundation, one would think, was calculated to fill Europe with bad books, and hinder the impreſſion of good. An author with no other recommendation than the merit of his compoſitions, is in great danger of being rejected by thoſe who are to licenſe them.

Concerning this, it is ſaid, that to judge of the ſciences does not require learning; which is as much as to ſay, that a clear ſight is not neceſſary to judge of colours. They alledge the inſtances of judges who are not lawyers; but in the courts of juſtice there are poſitive laws and forms; whereas the ſciences have no ſuch thing.

Another inconvenience in theſe committees, is the lazineſs of the members, who do buſineſs only when they pleaſe; for the profeſſion of an examiner of works of genius is a burden, and not an employment. The manuſcripts are only read when a judge is in the humour, and returned when he thinks fit.

Theſe offices for literary warrants are extremely long-winded; they only run over the rags and flitters of wit; the great works ſtick at the ſluggiſhneſs of the cenſors.

LETTER XXXIX.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, *to the Mandarin* Cham-pi-pi, *at* Paris.

Venice.

I Went yeſterday to the Ridotto, which I can only call a gaming ſchool, kept by the republic itſelf, where the citizens learn vicious habits. Servants diſpoſed to rob their maſters, women deſirous of injuring their huſbands, gameſters inclined to be cheats, need only frequent the Ridotto, and they will ſoon become familiar with ſuch crimes.

A foreigner muſt be extremely ſtruck at ſeeing the very legiſlature of this ſtate ſeducing the nation.

Fifty ſenators, with cards in their hands, aſk and urge the people to ruin themſelves.

It is only the noble Venetians who are allowed to corrupt the citizens. This right they hold by their birth; it is the privilege of their rank.

I have often intimated to thee this contradiction of the European governments. Moſt of them are for leading the people to virtue by the way of vice.

The republic of Venice keeps an open gaming-houſe; the public punts there in maſks; and the bankers, who are gentlemen, ſit bare-faced: this is juſt the reverſe of what ſhould be; the nobles ought to hide their faces.

LETTER XL.

The Same, to the Same, at Paris.

Venice.

THERE is an inquiſition of bonzes here, as in Spain and Portugal; only it cannot burn citizens without the ſtate's leave, which is no bad regulation; for, ſhould all, whom this tribunal might condemn, be actually put to death, Venice would ſoon be a deſert.

Not that the Venetians do not believe in God, but they are for believing in him after their own way.

In all the other ſtates of Italy the pope is the firſt perſon in the government; whereas at Venice he is only the ſecond. If any ordinances of his are not agreeable to the ſenate, they make no more of breaking them than a glaſs.

The bonzes are no leſs ſubordinate than the pope: if any one pretends to deviate from the obedience common to the other ſubjects, he is baniſhed, or ſent away to their common father, who reſides at Rome.

All religions are tolerated at Venice, even to thoſe of wicked prieſts. It muſt however be owned, that they

they are not all miſcreants. Some, in order to live well, eat Chriſt two or thee times a day. This the republic knows, and connives at it: provided a perſon be orthodox in regard to the government, he may be as heretical as he pleaſes in religion. You may queſtion the pope's infallibility, provided you do not take upon you to doubt of that of the *conſiglieta*.

LETTER XLI.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, *to the Mandarin* Kie-tou-na, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

THE Pariſians are ſo buſy, that they have no time to live. Placemen kill themſelves with application. The innovators are taken up in ſyſtems from morning till night. The ſchemers daily bring forth new projects; the men of buſineſs ſhut themſelves up in inacceſſible cloſets, the writers, here called authors, are in a continual labour of mind, inceſſantly bringing forth thoughts; the very courtiers are buſy, were it only in the pains they take to be thought ſo; the lovers of pleaſure are ſo hurried, that they have not time to have nothing to do, to indulge one's ſelf being a very troubleſome life at Paris. For to contrive every day new gratifications, requires great effort of mind, and labour of body; there muſt be going and coming, keeping appointments, ſpending the day in company, and ſitting up late: now all this is hard ſervice. The very loungers by profeſſion are buſy; for at Paris idleneſs it ſelf is a fatigue.

Women, who, one would think, ſhould have no buſineſs, have one very cumberſome, which is, to know and intermeddle in that of the whole city. Their dreſs, their ornaments, their deſire of being admired, and of gaining diſtinction every where, ſeems enough, without minding any thing elſe. To ſee the loads of buſineſs, under which thoſe very per-

ſon

ſons that have none are ready to ſink, is prodigious. I cannot tell how idlers hold out!

One ſingle woman ſhall lead two or three hundred artizans a weary life: if ſhe takes it into her head to appear on a certain day in a new dreſs, there is no longer any quiet in fifty families. I have ſeen a lady dreſſed in manufactures of three different centuries. She has been a plague both to paſt and preſent generations.

In a word, all the ſeveral claſſes of ſociety are ever in a buſtle; ſo that at Paris one may be rather ſaid to live after death, than in one's life-time.

LETTER XLII.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

OF all the *literati* in this capital none are more profound than thoſe called politicians: the extent of their erudition in their peculiar ſcience, politics, is prodigious. Other philoſophers fluctuate in doubts, theſe are ſure in every thing.

They may be conſidered as the plenipotentiaries of the Chriſtian world; they direct Europe; they declare at the beginning of a war, what will be the iſſue of it: you know before-hand in what the quarrels of princes will terminate. They plan the marches of generals, and lay down their motions; they ſeem to have meaſured geometrically the extent of their abilities and ſupplies.

Not a courier can be ſent from a prince, but they know the contents of the diſpatches; and they will tell you on what buſineſs an ambaſſador is going: no cabinet intrigues are hid from them; and they decide the intereſts of princes: ſo that, though it does not appear they have any correſpondence with courts, they are acquainted with all their intentions; and were they not almoſt always out in their conjectures, they might be thought conjurers.

Formerly

Formerly they were great betters, but have loſt ſo many wagers, that at preſent they have not wherewith to contradict the leaſt event. The king of Pruſſia has beggared them: when that prince began the war, which has now laſted ſix years, they laid that he would not hold out one campaign; and, conſequently, loſt; they laid the following year, and loſt again; and ſo on, till they have nothing left to loſe.

What comforts them in their diſaſters, is, that they have reaſons which demonſtrate, that they ought to have won; and ſo perſuaded are they of this, that were they not already ruined, they would ruin themſelves again; for this claſs of *literati* will never yield to facts, they are all for *hypotheſes*; they do not ſo much mind what is, as what ſhould be.

Frederic has been their ruin; not a ſiege or battle of his, which has not extremely hurt them; eſpecially one battle which broke great numbers of them: then indeed the moſt knowing ones might have been taken in; and ſcarce was ever wager loſt, with ſo fair a proſpect of winning.

Before theſe miſcarriages they were able to carry on correſpondences in foreign countries; but now they muſt take up with Dutch Gazettes for intelligence.

Their general rendezvous is the great walk in the garden of Palais-royal; there they hold forth, and promulgate what they know nothing of themſelves. Were they agreed in their principles, they would deafen both city and ſuburbs; but happily for the public tranquillity, ſome flatly deny what others poſitively affirm; and this ſilences the noiſe of altercation.

News-mongers are of two kinds; ſome birds of ill omen, ever portending ſome diſaſter: according to them the French nation is at the loweſt ebb, and the whole body of the monarchy on the eve of periſhing. The others are political ſyrens with a faſcinating voice: theſe conſolatory beings find a lenitive for every calamity. If France loſes a deciſive battle, ſo much the better, ſay they; great misfortunes

tunes are ever the forerunners of peace. If the Engliſh diſpoſſeſs the monarchy of rich countries in America, this they will have to be good news, as eaſing the ſtate of the vaſt expences in keeping them. If the people are loaded with exceſſive impoſts, for defraying the charges of armies, ſtill ſo much the better, as what is violent cannot laſt. They have always two or three proverbs at hand to tack to a piece of bad news, as palliatives to public calamities. Two of the moſt trite are theſe:

Foul weather brings fair.
After a ſtorm comes a calm.

But, in the mean time, France is ravaged by a continual ſtorm.

LETTER XLIII.

The Same, to the Mandarin Prime Miniſter at Pekin.

Paris.

WAR does not impoveriſh every body in France; ſome there are who grow rich by this calamity.

Sieges and battles require great taxes to be laid on the people; and from the levying of theſe burthens, ſprings this new-faſhioned opulence; a worſe misfortune than the very evil which produces it. A new breed of managers and clerks prey more fatally on the vitals of the monarchy, than taxes and impoſts. Nor is this all: armies further require implements and proviſions: hence directors, ſtore-keepers, comptrollers, and inſpectors; a ſecond breed of leeches, draining the people of their pureſt blood, and making a war on it more deſtructive than that of the enemy.

There is not a clerk of the victualling-office, who, in one campaign, does not make a plentiful proviſion for himſelf, were he to live to the end of the world. This I am inclined to believe; for he who cribs from

from the subsistence of two hundred thousand men, must of course have a large subsistence.

The hospitals of the army, especially, are the sources of over-grown fortunes. They are at present such rich mines, that those of Peru do not equal the profit of them.

I happened lately to dine with one of these commissioners, who take upon them the care of the sick and wounded soldiers: since this war he has built himself a very grand town-house, and keeps the best table in Paris. On the soup being served up, every body spoke highly in its praise. No wonder it should be rich, whispered one of the guests who sat next to me, for it is queezed out of the meat of twenty thousand sick men.

LETTER XLIV.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, *to the Mandarin* Cotao-yu-se, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

EXCLUSIVE of the opera and French comedy, Paris has a third theatre, consisting of buffoons, sent for from Italy, as if France had no such fools of its own. It would not, indeed, be very easy to find any more obscene, or more bald and insipid in their supposed pleasantries. One good thing however is, that they generally act in a language little understood: and certainly these people are ashamed of themselves; for, though they act in public, they dare not appear undisguised, uttering their low conundrums and jests under a mask. One would think, from the French gleaning the follies of other nations, that they have not enough of their own growth.

A two-legged animal with a flat nose, swarthy complexion, pigs eyes, the mouth of an ox, the plumage of a bird, and the gesticulations of an ape, is at the head of this theatre: from him arises the chief diversion of the spectators, and for this he usually makes

makes use of puns and double-entendres, both very low. I own, I could not but heartily pity the French nation on seeing it so highly diverted with such wretched stuff. The bursts of laughter from all quarters almost drew tears from me. I have not yet made any enquiry concerning the original of this institution; for I cannot think that the French nation ever stood in need of foreign drollery to keep it in high spirits.

This theatre apes all the others; its province is parody; for want of original genius it deals only in copies.

LETTER XLV.

The Same, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

NOT long since, the chevalier carried me to a lady of his acquaintance, where we found a good company of pretty women. We placed ourselves so as to see all the beauties of this circle, without being observed; being thus at liberty to discourse of its several members, most of whom my companion knew.

My eye was first attracted by a young and beautiful lady, with whose person I was much taken; yet, I thought, amidst all the lustre of her charms, I discerned some secret disquietude. This I communicated to the chevalier, pointing at her with my eye. You are not mistaken, answered he; that beauty labours under an anxiety of mind. Before her marriage our monarch had cast his eye on her, and she already looked on herself as sovereign of the little apartments at Versailles: but it came to nothing. From that instant she fell into a deep melancholy. It was thought that marriage would relieve the lady, and a rich financier was found out for her; but this only inflamed the distemper; and physiognomists say, that the disappointment will carry her to the grave. It is indeed a cutting stroke, instead of being

ing the miſtreſs of a mighty prince, to be yoked to a low-lived contractor. This is a reverſe, for which, among us, no virtue, morality, nor religion can be a match.

That other pretty woman, ſaid I, next to her, and alſo ſeemingly in a pining way, who is ſhe? That, antwered the chevalier, is another court patient: the ſame cauſe has produced the ſame effect. How! ſaid I, has the king caſt his eye on this alſo? No, returned he; but ſhe has caſt her eye on the king. Fairer than ſhe who poſſeſſes the monarch's affection, and not inferior in other allurements, her heart was bent on the royal conqueſt. With this view, ſhe has galloped all over Verſailles park, never miſſing a hunt, and always poſting herſelf in the avenues through which the king was to paſs; but it did not take. What afflicts her the moſt is, that the king ſaw her, without taking notice of her, and met her eyes with the greateſt indifference.

I ſee, at ſome diſtance from the two former, a lady of no diſagreeable perſon, and her looks of the ſame melancholy caſt. Pray, who is ſhe? Why, ſhe is a third valetudinarian of the ſame ſtamp. What! another court-patient? replied I haſtily: your emperor deſigns to kill all the pretty women in Paris. How can it be helped? returned he: they are women who, by all means, will be indiſpoſed, on account of a deſire which poſſeſſes them of being ſick. This laſt always falls into a ſwoon, every time ſhe hears that the preſent favourite has made a general, a cardinal, or a miniſter of ſtate. She fancies that the diſpoſal of all theſe employments is her right, and that all the authority of the other is a downright uſurpation on her charms. In the mean time, to keep up her rights, ſhe nominates to the principal employments of the kingdom, and makes biſhops in *partibus*.

I will trouble you with no more queſtions, only tell me who is that young beauty oppoſite to us, with a motley face; I mean, half ſprightly and half melancholy.

lancholy. Why, this is a lady with whom the king has lain only once: accordingly, her joy is but very imperfect; so that when she thinks on her felicity, she is all life; but when the fleeting dream of her grandeur obtrudes itself on her mind, when she thinks on his majesty's offering at her altar but once, she cannot forbear giving herself up to melancholy.

LETTER XLVI.

The Mandarin Sin-ho ei, *to the Mandarin* Champi pi, *at* Paris.

Venice.

THOU wilt be apt to think that I have a very agreeable life of it at Venice; as, in Europe, it is accounted the mansion of pleasure. Far from it; I am tired to death: one must be, as it were, cut out for the diversions of this city to partake of them. A foreigner, who loves neither gaming nor women, is quite forlorn; he may as well be in a desert as at Venice; every body here minds those diversions too much to mind him.

Here you are perpetually in company with vice; life is a round of voluptuousness and frivolous amusements: the morning goes away in sauntering; in the afternoon they mask themselves, in the evening go to the play; and the rest of the night is spent in gaming, or with women.

If the Venetian women are handsome, they are still more amorous; but in this they are authorised by the republic; for here every thing receives the sanction of the great council. It has often been deliberated, whether licentiousness ought not to be reformed; but after duly considering the point, things have been left as they were. Thus the practice of incontinence is allowed to the sex at their own discretion.

In China, we think there can be no good government without good morals, and that a people, to be happy, must be virtuous. That maxim is not known

known here. Politics have nothing to do with morality. Corruption is so far from being held incompatible with political authority, that politicians have advanced, that it might be made one of its principal engines.

During six months of the year, vice and extravagancy prevail here to a degree really frightful; and, for the more free commission of enormities, the republic allows disguises. Here every body may give themselves up to every kind of debauchery: this they call freedom; and really so free are they, that they have shaken off the very yoke of remorse.

It is not the populace alone which follows such infamous profligacy; a vein of dissoluteness runs through every class.

This city had formerly public prostitutes, dwelling in a particular quarter, and treated with all the contempt their profession deserved; but this depravation has been superseded by one more eminent; the very Venetian ladies are become courtesans.

Modern manners have abolished the antient. Marriage now is mere debauchery. Conjugal love is out of date. A husband and wife would expose themselves in setting up for fidelity; they would be ashamed of loving one another. If a woman has no gallant it is charged on her want of allurements, and thus she disgraces her husband. However, few or none give their husbands such a mortification. Illicit love is not reckoned a disgrace on either side.

It is an established prepossession, and corroborated by infinite instances. It seems an universal agreement, that the wife of one noble shall be the mistress to another, and all reciprocally disgrace each other by common consent. Such manners make one shudder.

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LETTER XLVII.

The Mandarin Cham-pi pi, *to the Mandarin* Kie-tou na, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

THE French are commonly ſaid to be generous. Indeed no nation in the world comes up to them in proteſtations; hiſtory has nothing equal to their generoſity and nobleneſs of mind in this reſpect. Their expence in offers of ſervices is really prodigious.

On my arrival here, ſeveral French, whom I ſcarce knew, were exceſſively forward to oblige me; they would not let me alone till I had given them my word, that I would occaſionally diſpoſe of every thing in their power. Not many days after, I wrote to him, who had been moſt urgent, to ſpare me his country houſe for a month or two: inſtead of the keys, he ſends me a letter, that he could not comply with my deſire, it being under repair.

The day after, I deſired a ſecond to ſend me five hundred ounces of ſilver, till my banker, who was in the country, ſhould be come to town: he refuſed me, under pretence of his having, the day before, made a remittance, which had left him quite bare.

Two days after, I ſent my ſervant to a third, to let him know that I wanted his coach for four days: the anſwer was, that he had lent it out. On this, I was for borrowing a horſe from a fourth, only to take an airing; but I was given to underſtand that he was lame.

The French alledge in excuſe, that all offers of ſervices are a coin which every body knows the value of. Be it ſo among the natives; but foreigners, at leaſt, ſhould be adviſed of theſe deceits. The calculators of public debts affirm, that were the French to make good the engagements contracted by their offers, the nation, if its caſh were a hundred thouſand millions

millions more than it is, would not have a ſingle farthing left.

LETTER XLVIII.

The Same, to the Superintendant of Religion at Pekin.

Paris.

MY letter on the chriſtian idols informed thee, that ſaints are counſellors pleading with God, in behalf of men. Their principal buſineſs, at the bar, is to varniſh over the worſt cauſe, and to make black white. The form of the pleadings is the ſame; all the difference is in the ſentence. If the ſaint ſets the fact in an advantageous light, and gives it a favourable turn, the ſinner gains his ſuit with coſts. When the coſts are divided, the two parties indemnify each other. God gives the delights of heaven, and the ſinner the pains of purgatory.

I ſend thee here one of theſe pleadings, which is carefully kept in a convent of bonzes; a ſaint interceding for a ſinner who has killed a man. The ſcene is in heaven, at the foot of the Deity's throne.

The Saint. O thou Being of Beings! Maker of Heaven and Earth! great God, who didſt die on the tree of the croſs to redeem mankind, and whoſe goodneſs is without bounds! I come to intercede for thy mercy to a poor mortal, who has killed another.

God angrily. Not a word of thoſe accurſed murderers; I am determined never to ſhew them any mercy.

The Saint. But he, for whom I now offer my mediation, is a true penitent.

God. A fine repentance truly, when the murder is committed!

The Saint. But, O God of mankind! conſider thy power.——

God That is what I am now conſidering: the pardon of this crime would be leſſening my authority:

ty: my clemency here clashes with my glory; for, should all men fall to killing one another, there would soon be an end of my power in the world.

The Saint. Yet I must beg thou wilt be pleased to pardon this unhappy manslayer.

God. This sin should be less pardoned now than ever; for most nations are making what haste they can to destroy each other by wars.

The Saint. But what signifies it, O God? the thing is done, the man is dead; there is no bringing him to life again.

God mildly. Who art thou?

The Saint. Saint Policarp.

God. And how come you to intercede for murderers? If I am not mistaken, that is none of your business.

Saint. He is one of my old customers; I have often interceded with you for him. He begged this favour of me, and I could not well refuse it.

God. I suppose he has made you a present of some fine wax candle.

Saint. He is indeed very generous in his offerings.

God. That is the way of all you saints. For a few pounds of wax, you would plead for the most enormous crime. Now mind, Policarp, I will for this time pardon the murderer, as you are so earnest in this cause; but never ask me such a thing again; for I give you my word, that for the next murder he commits, I will damn him for ever and ever.

LETTER XLIX.

The Same, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

HERE is a minister of state, who has the king's licence for corrupting the morals of the nation: women, intending to prostitute themselves and become infamous, apply to him. His department is licentiousness, being president of all the Paris play-houses

houſes. This miniſter may be ſaid, in ſome meaſure, to hold the reins of debauchery: he ſigns the paſſports of proſtigacy; a woman, with his licence for immorality, may boldly give herſelf up to all manner of corruption: that is, when once he has appointed her for the ſtage, the cenſor of manners, or the *lieutenant de police*, as he is here called, dares not touch her.

A young perſon diſpoſed to throw off the yoke of modeſty, a girl determined to leave her father and mother, and follow wicked courſes, a wife reſolved on parting from her huſband, to proſtitute herſelf publickly with her gallant, need only apply to this odious office. Couldſt thou ever have thought that there had been ſuch eſtabliſhments among a civilized people, and that they, who ſhould diſcourage vice and attend to the national morals, are the firſt in corrupting them? This is a privilege of the crown; for the power of authorizing debauchery is derived from the ſovereign.

The playhouſe-girls have the government's permiſſion for proſtigacy: another privilege of their's is, to ruin families, and ſquander away the fortune of minors, to hinder lawful marriages, to draw huſbands from their wives, to diminiſh population, and to fill the kingdom with ſhameful diſtempers, &c.

The other day I was ſhewn one of theſe abandoned playhouſe-girls, who lately threw into a ſhivering fit no leſs a perſon than the chief magiſtrate of Paris. He had ſummoned her, to make her give an account of a ſum of ſix hundred thouſand livres, which a financier, with a family had laviſhed away on her. At firſt, the actreſs excepted againſt the incompetency of the court; but afterwards made her appearance purely for the ſatisfaction of inſulting its chief. "Madam, "(ſaid the judge, already confuſed,) I know this is "going beyond the limits of my poſt; but zeal——" "Zeal, Sir! (haſtily interrupted the proſtitute) is "to know one's duty: it is not for ſuch a one as "you to ſend for ſuch a one as I. You know, that I "belong

" belong to the opera, and am diſtinguiſhed as a dan-
" cer: ſo neceſſary a perſon to the public, as I am,
" is not made to attend at the police.

" Beſides, Sir, what is the mighty buſineſs? Why
" truly a financier has ſpent ſix hundred thouſand li-
" vres with me. Well, and what have you to ſay
" to that? cannot a Frenchman give his money to
" whom he pleaſes? There is no law in France, at
" leaſt that I know of, by which a rich man is not to
" give, and a poor woman not to receive. If you
" are a lawyer, you ought to know, that, of all ac-
" quiſitions, that which comes by gift is the moſt
" lawful I ſuppoſe you would have opera-girls wait
" till their lovers die, to be heireſſes by will.

" Only one word more, Mr. Gravity: this ſaid
" financier has indeed given me half a million; yet is
" there one thing which vexes me; and that is, that
" he did not give me as much more."

At theſe words, ſhe burſt out a laughing, ſtarted up, ſtalked away to her chariot, and left the judge quite ſtupified at her petulance.

LETTER L.

The Same, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

IT is eaſy to keep awake at Paris, but not eaſy ſleeping: the buz of eight or nine hundred thouſand perſons confabulating together, the continual racket of twenty thouſand coaches, the tumult and confuſion in the ſtreet, the buſtle of the inhabitants, the loud cries of higiers, the mock muſic of quacks to gull paſſengers, the rumbling of drums beating up for ſoldiers, the ſinging of proceſſions and burials, the vociferations in publiſhing arrets and ſentences, the ſhrilneſs of trumpets giving notice that ſome body is going to be whipped or hanged, all this has little or no tendency to repoſe.

This hubbub of the day is immediately ſucceeded by the clutter of the night. People are no ſoon ergot

to

to bed, than the bonzes and bonzeſſes begin their noiſes. At midnight the air rings with the multitude of bells and chimes, all giving notice that thoſe devout perſons are going to pray to God. At two o'clock in the morning, when one begins to have ſome ſleep, the tinkling comes on again. At day-break more chiming. All religious and ſocial duties are here notified by noiſe: on good news coming from the army the cannons roar, and on any one's dying the bells toll. The ſovereign, the politics, religion, God, the ſaints, the angels, and the very dead, concur in killing the living.

LETTER LI.

The Same, to the Mandarin Cotao-yu-ſe, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

THE chevalier, who looks upon us as people dwelling in the antipodes of human reaſon, is ſurpriſed at hearing that the Chineſe have made any progreſs in the ſciences, and his wonder is little abated, on being told that we have underſtanding. This leads him, not ſeldom, to put ſome queſtions to me, which are truly European.

Mr. Chineſe, ſaid he lately to me, I have heard and read that there are men of learning and parts among you: but, by your leave, how came you by this genius? For to make a progreſs in arts and ſciences there muſt be principles and elements; and I always thought that learning had never croſſed the line; that Europe alone was enlightened, whilſt all the remainder of the univerſe lay in Cimmerian darkneſs.

Monſieur le Chevalier, anſwered I, this I ſhall clear up to you. You are to ſuppoſe that China, though little leſs than all Europe put together, makes only one family; and that this family is brought up under the eye of a father, who takes equal care of the education of all his children. Birth, rank, and fortune, do not in the leaſt alter this education. It is

bestowed on every member of the state. The situation of places, the distance of men, the quality of provinces, the largeness of cities, the politeness of towns, make no difference. Where-ever there are four Chinese, there is a master to instruct them.

By this general education, in an empire of such extent as China, it is impossible but that the genius of a great number of persons must make its way through the croud, and break forth to the public advantage.

But education would not be a jot the better for being universal, were it not founded on solid principles. The method our masters, or rather the government, take in forming the mind for sciences, is this.

All the sciences are interdicted to us in our childhood; the only book put into our hands is Confucius, as containing the first elements of the philosophy of our religion. We are first taught to read it, and then to understand it; which makes two different studies, one preparative to the other.

We are not allowed in our youth to have wit, nor acquire any one branch of knowledge, but what is to serve as a foundation to all the rest. With us, the sciences are not to be placed in our mind before their time, and not till the understanding is prepared for receiving them.

Purity of language is one of the first preparatives; for we judge, that there can be no just thinking without a precise manner of expression. Speech, being the image of the soul, must be clear; otherwise the exhibition of our ideas will be ambiguous.

Next to speech, comes the knowledge of such morals, manners, customs, and ceremonies, as are originated among us. Nothing is more common in Europe, by what I see, than *literati* and great scholars without the slightest knowledge of things, which constitute the most essential duties of civil life. They are acquainted with all the sciences, except the most necessary. In China, these things, far from being neglected, are taught in schools by principles equally with

with the moſt important ſciences. A man of letters among us is known by his graceful eaſineſs in making a bow. Theſe preparatives being gone through, every one chuſes the ſcience to which he thinks his genius beſt adapted; but which ever is embraced, there is no profeſſing it, till after ſtanding the teſt of many very ſtrict examinations by a company of mandarins of great abilities, appointed by the emperor: for, as taking what does not belong to us is a theft, we hold, that to aſſume the title of a ſcholar, without being ſo in reality, is alſo a public injury.

They, who when examined are found unequal to the ſcience in which they would take their degree, are ſeverely puniſhed; for among us, to be deficient in abilities for diſtinguiſhing ourſelves in the branch of learning of our own chuſing is a great crime, as implying many other defects; and it may even prove a capital caſe. This law, however cruel it may appear, is very juſt and beneficial, as preventing a multitude of vices, which falſe knowledge ever introduces. At the laſt examination, the emperor himſelf aſſiſts, and is perſonally a witneſs to the capacity of thoſe ſubjects, who are the beſt qualified to diſtinguiſh themſelves in arts and ſciences.

LETTER LII.

The Same, to the Mandarin Superintendant of Trade at Pekin.

Paris.

EUROPE is under contribution to the Indies; it annually remits thither conſiderable ſums for the ſupport of its luxury. The Indians dig in their mines for ſmall pebbles, which, on being ingeniouſly cut, have a great luſtre, and ſend forth, as it were, ſparkles of fire. Theſe are called diamonds; and the women are ſo exceſſively fond of them, that there is nothing they would not do for a pretty brilliant.

Such a preſent is the ſhorteſt cut to their heart, as being the readieſt way to gratify their vanity. Many a one, after long withſtanding a beautiful perſon, has immediately yielded to a beautiful diamond.

Beſides, theſe little pebbles here promote marriages; a woman muſt have a ſtrong averſion indeed to a man, if a ſet of diamonds does not reconcile her to him: they ſeem endued with a kind of ſympathetic virtue. The Indies may be ſaid to make moſt of the matches in Europe: many a difficult beauty would never have bowed the neck to the yoke of wedlock, had ſhe not been dazzled by a ſtone from the Eaſtern mines.

It is affirmed, that the value of theſe pebbles, now in France, is little ſhort of its current ſpecie; ſo that this luxury has impoveriſhed the nation by one half, and without it ſhe would be as rich again as ſhe is; for it muſt not be thought that the ſtate can ever realize this oſtentation: were it to make a ſale of all its diamonds, there would inſtantly be a great fall in the value of them. It is a wealth no farther real, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, than as it is chimerical.

But the original of this luxury is not ſo detrimental as the copy. In the want of a ſufficient number of natural diamonds, they have had recourſe to art; and an India has been ſet up at Paris. Theſe precious pebbles, the productions of nature, are become the buſineſs of artiſts. The work of God is made a manufacture.

This imitative luxury enables every one to ſhine. The diſproportion of the price from the original is ſuch, that a ſingle crown will purchaſe a hundred thouſand. But theſe hundred thouſand coſt leſs than one, becauſe they contain ſome value, ſuch as it is, whereas the other has none at all. Theſe fictitious diamonds diſſolve of themſelves; ſo that there muſt be daily a new creation, which is a vaſt inhancement of the price.

The reaſon in vindication of it is, that the money does not go out of the kingdom. But the circulation by

by this luxury is lumped together, and not duly extended: I have ſeen one of theſe diamond makers, ſaid to be worth above a million. It would be almoſt as well for France, if this ſum, thus in the hands of one perſon, had been ſent to the Indies.

LETTER LIII.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, *to the Mandarin* Champi pi, *at* Paris.

Ferrara.

IS there any colony in Aſia that would be willing to come and dwell in a large and well-built European city, full of empty houſes? I know of ſuch a city; and that is Ferrara, where I now am, and from whence I write to thee. It may very well put this bill on its gates, A CITY TO BE LETT.

I am here almoſt alone with another foreigner, called the vice-legate.

The diſpeopling of this city is attributed to the bad air; but I rather think the cauſe to be in the bad government.

How many countries in Europe, with a climate not to be compared with that of Ferrara, are yet full of inhabitants!

This city appears, from the hiſtory of Italy, to have formerly contained a great number of inhabitants; at preſent it has nothing but buildings.

This country is without agriculture, arts, or trade; and this alone is enough to thin it.

It has no maſter; for in Europe, a ſtate belonging to the church belongs to no body. Now never was any ſtate known to flouriſh without a political chief; for I do not look on the eccleſiaſtical mandarin, who ſends another to a government he can't attend to himſelf, to be any thing of a chief.

Several ſtates have made a reſignation of themſelves to the holy ſee; but Ferrara the popes uſurped. They ordered its lawful ſovereign to depart, and ſeated themſelves in his throne.

Indeed they herein closely kept to the pontifical forms: they previously excommunicated him, than which, in those times, there could not be a better contrivance for making a prince odious to his subjects, as it discharged them from the oath of fidelity.

Here men and women shut themselves up in convents, so that the city is a perfect community of monks and nuns. The men go into monasteries, and the young women are recluses; so that generation is absolutely separated.

If colonies are not sent to Ferrara, the city, in a short time, must be quite bare of inhabitants; then the apostolic agent may return to Rome, and say to the pope, Your holiness has the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and here I bring you those of an earthly sovereignty.

LETTER LIV.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, *to the Mandarin* Cotao-yu-se, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

THE European traders have a very easy way of enriching themselves. Their method is this: they get together as much money as they can possibly raise, then shut their door, and keep what they have. This is here called a bankruptcy.

This creditable way of getting other people's substance has the sanction of the magistrate. The methods observed in it are three, but the drift of all is the same.

The first is, to bring one's creditors to a meeting, and there declare to them, "Gentlemen, I owe you "a million of livres; I can pay you only fifty thou-"sand: that's my last word; you may take or "leave." This way of purloining other people's property, as it is the most honourable, so it is the most in use; for thus the public know nothing of the

the matter, and the perſon's general credit not being diminiſhed, he becomes enabled at a proper juncture, to make a ſecond private declaration to another ſet of creditors.

The ſecond method is, the ſending his books to an office, and keeping the money. Theſe books are always in order, as one may commit to paper what one pleaſes. Examiners are appointed; the affair is ſoon brought to an iſſue; and they go into trade again, as if nothing had happened.

The laſt is quite plain. The beſt effects are turned into caſh, which the parties carry off, and leave the creditors to make the beſt of bad debts, and unſaleable goods. This is called a fraudulent bankruptcy; but, between this and the others, all the difference generally lies only in a few written pages. At the firſt bankruptcy, the party is ſeldom rich; nor in very flouriſhing circumſtances at the ſecond; but at the third, his fortune is large.

The European governments have no right notions in mercantile adminiſtration. The public diſorders are always confounded with the perſonal. A trader, by ſtopping payment, makes a breach in the trading community. Commerce is affected by it; it diſcourages induſtry and ſkill. In a word, he is a criminal, as having embezzled the truſt conſigned to him. His cauſe cannot properly be tried by his peers: his offence comes under the cognizance of the government. As the general welfare is intereſted therein, it ſhould be tried like other public crimes. Friendly bankrupts, as they are called, are contrary to the ſovereign's juſtice and the fundamental laws. A perſon, on devoting himſelf to commerce, becomes the commonwealth's man. All his meaſures ſhould be open and warrantable by law: his ſecret agreements are clandeſtine plots againſt the government; and the creditor no leſs culpable than the debtor. The bankrupt, on his failure, is reputed the king's priſoner, and ſhould be releaſed only by the law.

In anſwer to this, it is aſked, whether a perſon is not at liberty to give his ſubſtance to another, or re-

cede from his claims? No, not in the caſe of a fraudulent bankruptcy. A Frenchman cannot ſtop the courſe of juſtice againſt his ſervant who has robbed me; and why then ſhould I be allowed to acquit a tradeſman who has embezzled his ſubſtance? It is lawful to forgive, but not to compound for a robbery; which is felony againſt the law, and breach of the public order.

The Europeans are ſtrangers to any ſuch thoughts; accordingly trade among them is little better than larceny.

LETTER LV.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, *to the Mandarin* Cham-pi-pi, *at* Paris.

Bologna.

IT is now ſome time ſince I have been in the country of the popes, the city of cardinals, the ſeat of prieſts, and the ſeminary of ſingers.

The ſoil of Bologna is fruitful to exuberance. China excepted, the whole earth has nothing like it.

There is a commerce in this city, which I never heard of among any people in the world: the Africans make a traffic of men, but the Bologneſe trade in dogs.

This is a large well paved city, full of churches, colleges and doctors. The natives inſtead of a language, expreſs themſelves by geſtures and a kind of jargon, with which thoſe who underſtand it are much diverted.

Bologna, as it were, owes a buffoon to every theatre in Italy; a comedy would not take, without a Bologna doctor.

Beſides buffoons, here are alſo great numbers of monks. Its convents are the largeſt monaſtical barracks in all Chriſtendom. Some are even like towns; and ſo many are there of theſe towns, that, take them away, Bologna would be no more than a village.

Its

Its ſchool of morality is far from being in ſuch repute as its ſchool of painting. The Bologneſe make no account of the knowledge of men, but apply themſelves intirely to copy their faces.

A father, with two ſons, diſpoſes of one to the idleneſs of Bologna, and the other he ſends to the intrigues of Rome. The former ruins his family, whilſt the other, in a continual progreſs, ſhall make his way through the crowd of the ſacred college to the *tiara*, and, in thirty years after, raiſes his family again: at the ſecond generation it receives a ſecond fall, and is again raiſed by a church-man.

The Bologna nobility is the moſt ancient by the church, and the moſt modern by the ſword. The records are filled with titles derived from the triple crown and the purple.

It is very numerous; for every Bologneſe pope, beſides five or ſix princes, creates twenty or thirty nobles. In other ſtates of Europe, the ſeries of anceſtors is required to nobility; but here a conclave will do.

A man, very far from being noble himſelf, can, by the operation of the holy ſpirit, ennoble a crowd of plebeians. A mendicant monk, who has ſolemnly renounced titles and ranks, no ſooner comes to be pope, than he makes gentlemen of all kinds

Women alſo obtain to nobility by the church: the intrigues of cardinals with them, purify their deſcent: they would be much more noble, were popes made in their younger years; but they are ſo decrepit at their creation, that they are no longer able to confer nobility on women.

This is the country of debauchery, muſic, and devotion. Six hours of the day are ſpent in praying, eight in ſinging, and ten in proſtitution.

Every corner of the ſtreet is an altar, every altar has an image, and every image performs miracles.

LETTER LVI.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, *to the Superintendant of Religion at* Pekin.

Paris.

THERE was formerly a terrible circumſtance in the chriſtian religion. Believers, who had ſinned, though but ſlightly, were condemned to eternal burning: this was very hard for thoſe who had not ſinned on purpoſe. After many deliberations, about an expedient for preventing ſuch numbers of well-meaning ſinners from being hurled down to hell for ever, purgatory was hit on.

I wiſh I could explain to you what this ſame purgatory is. The Europeans, who are full of fictions in all things, have a fable of the river called Lethe, the water of which makes one forget every thing that is paſt. Now purgatory is a kind of river Lethe; God forgets that he was offended, and expunges his juſtice. Purgatory may be alſo looked on as a proteſt for ſinners againſt the power of the devil.

It is very hot in purgatory, but far leſs than in hell. Its flames burn, but without conſuming; they are only of a purifying quality. At the end of ſome centuries, the ſinner comes out as clear as cryſtal, and goes and takes his ſeat in heaven, as if nothing had been the matter.

Chriſtianity has ſcarce a project which comes up to this: at the end of the world, God would otherwiſe have been almoſt alone in paradiſe; whereas purgatory is continually ſupplying it with elect.

It is pity ſuch a glorious plan ſhould have any thing mercenary in it; but purgatory muſt be purchaſed; and the bonzes and eccleſiaſtical mandarins have ſet two prices: they, who are afraid of being burnt, buy it outright, and are releaſed almoſt in an inſtant; but to go thus directly to heaven, with only being ſinged in their flight through purgatory, requires

quires a large ſum: I have been told, that ſome half-reprobate Chriſtians have paid above fifty thouſand taels to redeem themſelves from theſe purifying flames.

As to thoſe who cannot purchaſe a deliverance, they quietly broil from generation to generation.

Not a few European philoſophers have repreſented riches as of little or no value; but it muſt be owned, that the inſtitution of purgatory has made them good for ſomething.

Every body is a gainer in this market. Continual collections are making for the ſouls in purgatory; and thoſe Chriſtians who ſide with the pope, are continually giving alms. Boxes ſet up for this purpoſe fill every day; but the ſouls in purgatory ſee little of the money. Laſtly, pagods, from being very poor, ſince the invention of purgatory, are grown exceſſively opulent.

This inſtitution, however, is only for venial ſins; had a purgatory been likewiſe erected for the mortal, it would then have been a good thing to be a Chriſtian. Such an inſtitution is a rare encouragement for the ſinners of this ſect. What matters it to offend the Supreme Being? Money will keep one from going to hell.

Perhaps, there are not in the world greater calculators than the Europeans. I have been told of a computation, containing the number of ſouls reſcued from the flames of purgatory ſince the inſtitution thereof: the number is immenſe, and conſiſts of Chriſtians of all ranks, callings, and conditions, except popes, except kings, except miniſters of ſtate, except monks, except financiers, except devotees; all theſe folks go directly to hell.

LET-

LETTER LVII.

The Same, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

THE miniſters of ſtate in France are ever tottering; they are never ſeen to ſtand firm on their feet On my arrival at Paris two happened to be diſplaced, and ſoon after, three were made. No lodging-houſe in the whole city ſhifts maſters oftener than that of the comptroller of the finances. A miniſter is ſcarce warm in his poſt before he muſt quit it to another, who himſelf muſt ſoon make room for a third. They, as it were, meet one another on the ſtair-caſe of adminiſtration.

The king of France ſeems to be ever reviewing his miniſters; and theſe, as it were, only paſs through their offices. Thou muſt well think how public affairs go amidſt ſuch continual changes; the leading men being never fixed in their poſts, the ſtate muſt always be on the totter.

It is nothing uncommon to hear of the removal of a miniſter before his promotion was known. Accordingly, it is cuſtomary to go and compliment him on it in the morning, leſt the afternoon ſhould be too late. On the day that the preſent head of the treaſury was nominated, a nobleman of his acquaintance drove without delay to his hotel in order to wiſh him joy. Pray, ſaid he, to the porter, is your maſter ſtill miniſter? the man, who as yet had heard nothing of it, made anſwer, it was more than he knew. You will ſee, ſaid he, turning to another nobleman in his chariot, that he will be diſmiſſed before he is well made.

As every body here knows, that a miniſter going into power is to make but a ſhort ſtay there, they take their meaſures accordingly. Every one is urgent for favours, and the miniſter, ſenſible that his diſmiſſion is at hand, makes the beſt of his time. Why ſhould he be at the pains to examine into capacity, recompenſe

recompenſe talents, and beſtow employments only on merit, as he knows that a few days will put a period to his power, and it will ſcarce be remembered that he ever exiſted? Nay, what is more, he finds the affairs of the monarchy embarraſſed, and he entangles them ſtill more, that his ſucceſſor may be the harder put to it to unravel them: this is his revenge for the inſtability of his poſt.

LETTER LVIII.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

THE depravation of manners in France is monſtrous. A crime daily committed here, which nature ſhudders at, is the higheſt pitch of human corruption. In Africa, fathers are ſaid to ſell their children to labour; here, mothers ſell their daughters for proſtitution: they themſelves make the unnatural bargain, and pocket the gain of their crime.

In Barbary, a great number of children is a fund of wealth to parents; and, in France, the mother of ſeveral daughters makes a good fortune of them.

Education and talents are the uſual foundations of this infamous contract. The view of bringing them up well, is, that they may ſell the better. The more beauty and accompliſhments, the higher price is put on their innocence.

The police is acquainted with theſe bargains, and all the judges and magiſtrates are not ignorant of them; they are known to every body, yet no-body opens his mouth about them.

Fail not to burn this letter; for I would not have it known in our country, that there are ſuch monſters on the earth. Among depraved people there are crimes, of which wife governments ſhould not have the very leaſt idea: ſhewing human nature to them in ſo hideous a character would give them too ill an opinion of it, and thus they might come to loſe the confidence due to virtue.

LET-

LETTER LIX.

The Same, to the Same, at Paris.

Paris.

OF all the ſciences profeſſed in France, politics come cheapeſt; nay, ſo very cheap, that every footman can purchaſe it. For two ſous you are informed of the intereſt of princes, with the negociations all over Europe, and know twice a week how the world goes.

The principles of this ſcience are contained in half-ſheets of paper, called Gazettes. Its uſual lectures are held in little academies, at the gates of the Palais-royal, and the Thuilleries, where porters ſell the ſagacity of courts. He, who is for being very knowing in the ſecrets of cabinets, and to this purpoſe reads many papers, pays the more; for politics have a ſettled price, ſo much the half-ſheet. In theſe Lycæums the ſtudents are punctually informed of what is not doing in the ſeveral courts, and they read juſt quite other things than what they would know.

Moſt of thoſe Gazettes come from abroad; the chief profeſſors in politics reſide in Holland, a thriſty republic making an advantage of common report, and ſo induſtrious as to profit by lying. From thence it is, that the adepts communicate to the other European nations their extenſive learning, and acute reflections.

All theſe papers are noted for a peculiar kind of erudition. The Amſterdam Gazette, which takes the lead of the others, is very profound in the ſuperficies of facts, and full of an elocution moſt methodically tireſome; the Hague Gazette cannot be too much admired for its imaginary events; that of Rotterdam is diſtinguiſhed for lying; and that of Utrecht for not telling truth. But, for falſe and fictitious occurrences, the *Avignon Courier* beats them all. The writer is an apoſtate bonze, and twice a week conſtantly vends his apoſtaſies in this paper. There

is

is likewiſe the French Gazette, but the government forbids it to ſpeak truth; it is dull and inſipid by command.

I have been informed, that once a reſolution had been taken againſt foreign Gazettes being brought into the kingdom; but it was not put in execution, probably from the government's having reflected on the conſequences of ſuch a meaſure. Certain it is, that ſuch a prohibition would have occaſioned one of the greateſt revolutions ever known in the French monarchy: for what then would have become of ſuch numbers of *automata* in Paris, thoſe machines whoſe ſprings are inactive till ſome article in the news-papers ſets them in motion? It would have been cutting aſunder the thread of public diſcourſe, and impoſing an irkſome ſilence on all the coffee-houſe politicians.

Farther, this prohibition would have ſtarved not a few old officers, who, having picked up, at one of the above-mentioned little academies, an article of ſome little conſequence, immediately repair to well-provided houſes, where their news is paid them down in a dinner.

It would have been ſtriking France dumb; for what could have been found to replace thoſe words, ſo trite in all companies, and with which all French converſations open, *What news? What does the Dutch Gazette ſay? How go the armies on?*

One cannot forbear lamenting the imbecillity of mankind, in ſeeing a nation, which is reckoned to have its full ſhare of wit, genius, and diſcernment, reduced to paſs away its days in talking of ſuch futilities.

Thou canſt not imagine the yawning and wearineſs here in the want of the Dutch, Flanders, or Avignon mails; as if the ſnow or ice, which hinders the coming of the poſt, froze up wit at Paris; for frozen it is as hard as a ſtone, and the thaw does not come on till the arrival of the Gazettes, and then the ice diſſolves inſtantaneouſly.

LET-

LETTER LX.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

NONE of the buildings ſhewn here to foreigners eſcaped my curioſity; but there is no viſiting them without a guide. A ſtranger muſt loſe himſelf, as I may ſay, in the ſtreets of apartments, and the different quarters, of which theſe houſes conſiſt. Some are ſo immenſely vaſt, that they would contain an African kingdom with all its people.

Theſe prodigious ſtructures put me often on reflecting how much men endeavour to depart from their primary origin. The firſt men, probably, made a cave in the ground, to ſecure themſelves againſt the wild beaſts; and this might, for ſome time, have been their uſual dwelling. Their numbers increaſing, they took mud, and built a hut: the firſt huts may be ſuppoſed not to have been bigger than to contain a middling family; but they ſoon proceeded to raiſe a ſecond above the firſt, and that ſerved as a foundation for the third; till, as conveniencies led to the invention of elegancies and enjoyments, and theſe are productive of luxury, huts gradually became edifices: what had been invented for eaſe cauſed fatigue: men made to dwell on the ſurface of the earth, were obliged to go half way up to heaven to get into their houſes. Marble and ſtone were made ſubſervient to human vanity, and men, who were to die in a few years, built dwellings to laſt a thouſand.

At preſent, private perſons in France have manſions like thoſe of kings, and kings like thoſe of the Gods.

I would ſuppreſs all parade and magnificence, except in public edifices; thoſe of the ſubjects ſhould be under regulation. This police would be found more uſeful that is at firſt apprehended: among ſeveral other advantages, would be this, that private perſons

perſons could not then bury themſelves, and all their generation, in overgrown buildings.

LETTER LXI.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, *to the Mandarin* Champi-pi, *at* Paris.

Bologna.

BOLOGNA is under the direct dominion of heaven; it has Chriſt's deputy for ſovereign. It is with the keys of paradiſe that the popes open the door of this political power.

Could men bring themſelves to agree, they would be free; whereas, through their variances, they are generally ſlaves Of this, almoſt every occurrence in the hiſtory of Europe is an inſtance.

The Bologneſe, diſguſted at a ſovereignty of their own, put themſelves under that of the pope. For a political ſtate to ſubmit itſelf, of its own accord and deliberately, to ſuch an ignominy, argues extreme corruption.

I have often wondered, how it comes that the people of Italy, for near fifteen hundred years paſt, have run headlong into ſlavery: it muſt be in a great meaſure owing, I believe, to luxury, ſloth and effeminacy.

The Romans diſturbed the world, and afterwards themſelves, by infinite toils and aſtoniſhing expeditions: a general wearineſs followed on the heels of thoſe agitations. The Italian nations, their ſucceſſors, ſet up the arts of pageantry and oſtentation, the natural conſequence of voluptuouſneſs. The only ambition then was, to be idle. The maintenance of freedom requires activity; whereas, to be ſlaves, one need not ſtir a finger.

A people is ignorant of its intereſt, when terrified at its own diviſions and civil wars, it gives itſelf up to a foreign potentate. In ſo doing it runs into thoſe misfortunes which it was for avoiding. Thoſe terrifying

fying wars are what alone can ſave it from being ſubdued. The hiſtory of this part of the globe ſhews moſt ſtates ſpringing up again from the aſhes of civil contentions.

Bologna, indeed, at reſigning itſelf to the pope, retained its privileges; but when a ſtate gives itſelf up to a foreign government, there is an end of all privileges.

The ceſſion of the political power annuls all reſerve of prerogatives.

A people voluntarily ſubmitting to ſervitude, generally would be ignorant that they are ſlaves.

The republic of Bologna affects to be free, and, as a ſhow of equality, ſends an ambaſſador to Rome, whilſt at the ſame time, the pontiff ſends thither a legate, who is her maſter.

Forty ſenators form a ſenate without counſel, which elects a prince without power. This ſovereign is ſtilled *Gonfalonier*. His reign is as ſhort as his authority is limited: after ſixty days he lays down his crown, and becomes a ſubject again. The election, inſtead of being arbitrary, goes by rotation; every ſenator being, in his turn, a prince for ſix months. It is not merit which promotes to this dignity, but a ſeat; every ſeven years, each ſenator ſeats himſelf on this mock throne.

LETTER LXII.

The Mandarin Cham pi-pi, *to the Mandarin* Co-tao-yu-ſe, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

I Am often at the play-houſe, but not ſo much from any liking to theatrical plays, as to ſee what which the audience acts. This to me, is much more entertaining than what paſſes on the ſtage being always original, and exhibiting the national ridicules. It begins a long time before the curtain riſes, and continues half an hour after its fall: that is, this play has two acts more than that which the company comes to ſee.

It

It is generally the pit which opens this exhibition, and in a manner that one would think it made of clock-work with a regulated motion. It has its flow and ebb, like the ocean: one wave drives the ſpectators towards the orcheſtra, and another carries them back to the door. The movers of the waves are uſually young muſqueteers, with whom this is a mighty diverſion. They open and ſhut the pit like a box: I lately ſaw two country gentlemen ſo huſtled about, that I believe they will not be able to ſtir out of their rooms theſe ſix months. If any one happens to be in the pit in the midſt of a knot of thoſe gentry, he may bleſs his ſtars if he gets out with all his limbs.

But this is only a prelude to the audience-play: it conſiſts of dumb converſation in the boxes. That evening the firſt ſcene began with a young lady: an abbé had been her favourite; but the ungrateful creature contracted another clandeſtine match with a lady, who was alſo that night in the boxes. The two rivals along time threatened each other with their eyes: the looks of one betrayed implacable rage and malice; whilſt the other inſulted with the moſt lively expreſſion of joy and triumph. This phyſiognomical conteſt continued ſome time, when the pretty rivals proceeded to geſtures, grimaces, and flirts of the fan.

In the mean time the abbé's hands, which till then had been in ſight, ſuddenly diſappeared: yet the abbé was ſtill preſent: that they were out of the box could not be thought, but undoubtedly they were hid ſomewhere. Here the forſaken lady could not conceal her indignation: her looks ſtrongly ſpoke; they ſaid to the ſpectators with an impaſſioned emphaſis, ſee that perfidious wretch! he carries his contempt of me ſo far, as thus publicly to indulge his paſſion: then, there's a woman! was there ever any thing ſo indecent! ſhe minds nothing but her inordinate appetite. This very moment ſhe is perhaps enjoying a thouſand little ſenſations, by way of preparation to a greater pleaſure after the play; for French women,

men, only by the motion of the eyes, can make a connected ſpeech, with all its *parentheſes*. The Pariſian pit cannot endure inactivity; underſtanding this ſilent elocution, they ſet about revenging the fair petitioner, calling out, No ſmuggling, Mr. Abbé! Up with your hands! Out hands!——— and immediately his hands appeared.

Near this box, another play was acting. A ſtale, but rich widow, fancying ſhe had captivated an officer, whoſe commiſſion was his whole ſubſtance, diſcovered that night, by an ogle of his, that his deſign was on her young and pretty daughter. This preference ſo incenſed the mother, that ſhe caſhiered him immediately in the eyes of the whole audience. The officer, far from being dejected at his diſmiſſion, ſeeing himſelf without employment, went and offered his ſervices in another box, to a lady who had no daughter. Immediately the pit applauded his choice by a general clap, and hiſſed the ſtale widow. Then there were not leſs than four dumb ſcenes at this ſecond exhibition; the old widow's rancour, the daughter's chagrin, the young lady's pleaſure, and the officer's ſatisfaction. Beſides theſe continual comedies, there are interludes without number, of ſpectators going and coming, clambering up or throwing themſelves down from one box to another. You ſee them in the firſt, at the ſame time in the ſecond, and in the twinkling of an eye they are got up in the third: this part of the audience-play might be called the tumbling-ſcene.

LETTER LXIII.

The Same, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

THE European world ſprings from two ſtems: ſociety here is divided into noble and ignoble; though very little is required to be of the firſt claſs! a family, by getting its name written in the annals of the world, becomes noble; and that, which has forgot

forgot this circumſtance, remains ignoble. It is memory which gives the turn.

Any one proving that his anceſtors lived nine hundred years ago, is indiſputably a gentleman; and he, who can make no ſuch proof, is no gentleman. Thus thou ſeeſt, that there is no difference between a gentleman and another, both having had anceſtors of nine hundred years ſtanding, and the whole merit conſiſts in remembering it. However, another way has been invented, which is, to forget it. An European, who can prove his family to be of ſuch antiquity, that all traces of it are loſt, is noble and moſt noble. An origin lying beyond the reach of recollection is concluded, of a certainty, to be more than vulgar or common. At this rate, the world itſelf is a thorough gentleman, the time of its formation being far from certain. For the ſame reaſon all men muſt be ſo; for, if the ſtem be noble, the branches muſt of courſe partake of its nobility.

A very important circumſtance of this point is, the producing an old worm-eaten piece of parchment: the difference between ſterling nobility and the falſified, lies chiefly in the difficulty of reading the patents: that which can ſcarce be decypered, ſhews the nobility genuine; whereas one which can be read fluently, is dubious. The falſities contained in the parchment muſt be of an antient date, for in genealogy, no credit is given to modern lyes. An impoſture of an hundred years is too recent; whereas one of ſix centuries ſtrikes with reſpect: no body offers to diſpute its authenticity.

France has a nobility which I highly eſteem; it is that of fine actions. Merit ſhould in equity be honoured, and citizens, who have done important ſervices to their country be diſtinguiſhed; but to it is, that this ſacred ſource of real nobility, from the many wretched abuſes of it, does more harm than good. Five or ſix memorable ſervices, done by the anceſtors of a noble family, generally render their ſucceſſors uſeleſs members of a ſtate. Inflated with this honour,

honour, they imagine, that, by virtue of the glorious actions of their predeceſſors, they may ſpend their days in indolence.

A perſon, whom I meet here in my viſits, who ſpends his life between the public walks and coffee-houſes, the gaming-table, theatre, and worſe places, gave me lately to know that he was noble; and in proof that he was ſo, he related many great atchievements of his anceſtors, named to me the battles where they had diſtinguiſhed themſelves, and related ſome prodigies of courage, which had gained them immortal glory. And, Sir, ſaid I, interrupting him, what part had you in all thoſe celebrated exploits? Why, none at all, anſwered he; how could I? And how can you arrogate to yourſelf the merit of actions which you did not perform?

Here they are always confounding the origin of nobility with the nobles, though two very different things. To preſerve nobility from degenerating, it ſhould be only for life. A citizen, who has done great ſervices to the ſtate, or who has diſtinguiſhed himſelf by ſome perſonal merit of public utility, ſhould be noble to the hour of his death. A hero, at his departure out of the world, ſhould carry all his honours with him, nothing remaining behind but the fame of his actions: his tomb ſhould be as a barrier between him and his deſcendants. All antient patents I would have aboliſhed; the claim to nobility ſhould be perſonal merit: every citizen ſhould be the firſt deſcendant of his race, and the laſt noble of his family.

LETTER LXIV.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

SINCE my laſt, I was reflecting on the Inconveniencies of the nobility being ſo very numerous in France, when a man of a ſhabby appearance came

came into my room: Sir, said he, after two or three low bows, I come to offer to make you noble. Me noble! cried I, and pray by what authority? By my profession, answered he, I am a genealogist; I make origins; my trade is gentility. That would be impossible in my case, replied I; none of my ancestors ever made any noise in the world: they are all dead, without having been so much as perceived to live. That's nothing; I have ennobled those, whose ancestors were the quietest people on earth; they made no more noise among the living than if they had been dead. I conclude, you don't know that I am a a Chinese. Yes, I do, says he, and it is on that very account I come to offer you my service. I have a Chinese genealogy already to ennoble you. And from whom will you derive my descent? said I. From the great Confucius, answered he; for I will ennoble you to some purpose, and not by halves, as every day I do Frenchmen; who, as they cannot afford to purchase an antient nobility, take up with a petty country gentleman for a founder. The origin you talk of, said I, appears to me a difficult point. O! I daily draw out much more difficult. A descent from Confucius is nothing, in comparison of those plebeians whom nothing will satisfy under an ancestor or two of the order of the Holy Ghost, and whom I must ennoble from amidst the rubbish of their forefathers. You will be highly pleased with my genealogical table: it deduces the male and female branches down to yourself; and Confucius is the stem: he shall be the first branch of your family, and you the last. I hope this genealogical tree will do you no less honour than myself: it is a masterly piece, and yet will cost you but a hundred crowns: this is now a days, a settled price; a plebeian pays it down without a word.

You must be very rich, said I, to the man? Our profession, answered he, was formerly pretty good; but the king's turning genealogist has hurt us very much. This monarch, without having ever studied our science, has found out a secret of giving ancestors

tors to thoſe who have none. Behold the force of conceit! We make nobles for ten louis-d'ors, and with the king it coſts above twenty thouſand livres; yet the people go to him, preferably to us. A very irrational preference, indeed, ſaid I to the genealogiſt; it is wrong to have recourſe to the monarch, when you are ſo very reaſonable in your demands. O, very wrong, replied he, and after all he knows no more of heraldry than we do; and our letters of nobility are as good as his, perhaps even better; for his always begin at the ſixteen partitions, whereas our's finiſh them. Mr. Ennobler, replied I, has the ſovereign deprived you of all your cuſtomers? No, no, anſwered he, we have ſtill a great many left. The Exciſe and finances ſtill afford a comfortable ſubſiſtance to a great number of our profeſſion at Paris. Here is a liſt of ignobles, continued he, taking a paper out of his pocket, whom I have ennobled only this year; and began to read it aloud: *Ten farmers general, twenty clerks of the taxes, thirty receivers of the finances, forty retail tradeſmen, ſix houſe-ſtewards, twelve footmen*, &c. &c. all theſe new-made nobles are ſo many maſter-pieces in genealogy. The ſtem of both males and females was ſo eaten up with the ruſt of abaſement, that there was no ſuch thing, as furbiſhing them; ſo I even patched them up with apocryphal vouchers.

Thoſe of the clerks of the taxes took me up above ſix months in cleaning; and after all I could make but a dulliſh kind of nobility of them. That of the receivers was alſo a knotty buſineſs; but I thought the nobilitation of the tradeſmen would have turned my brains. The mean origin of the ſtewards engaged me in laborious inveſtigations: the eaſieſt part was with the footmen; of all this factitious nobleſſe, the livery has the leaſt of vulgarity.

Still the moſt difficult point is, not ſo much the nobilitation of theſe people, as to give them arms; for where can a coat be found for them? It is not conceivable, what pains I have been at in this particular:

cular: as to the financiers indeed, I ſoon ſtruck out one pretty ſignificant to them; mountains, *or*, in a field, *argent*.

Another Difficulty I have with theſe plebeians is, that coronets will not ſatisfy them; they muſt have crowns forſooth! now how, in the name of goodneſs, ſhould I bring families of clerks and footmen into a conſanguinity with thoſe of ſovereigns? As to thoſe who are for having lilies in their ſhield, that is ſoon accommodated, moſt having them on their ſhoulders *. This is what in heraldry we call ſpeaking arms.

Is it only men of fortune, ſaid I, who are fond of being ennobled? Moſt of the French affect it, anſwered he; the very poets put in for nobility; but here the genealogiſt has the devil and all to do, theſe creatures being all plebeians, from father to ſon, ever ſince the deluge.

The very players alſo are for ſhaking off their mean extraction: it is not long ſince I made an actor at the opera noble: indeed he was iſſued from Orpheus, and had acted ſo many parts of kings and emperors, that he was already illuſtrious.

You ſeem, Mr. Genealogiſt, to carry on your buſineſs with a great deal of facility. Not ſo much as you think. Sometimes (allow me the expreſſion) we muſt ſcratch our heads: the philoſophers cut us out a plaguy deal of work: where are we to find nobility for wretches, who never had houſe nor home, ſprung from a caſk, the manſion of Diogenes, and he a boaſted anceſtor of their's?

We alſo muſt thraſh very hard to give a luſtre to the mean extraction of the military knights of St. Lewis, whoſe origin generally is as obſcure as the ſources of the Nile.

We are given to hope that we ſhall ſoon nobilitate the knights of Malta, who begin to grow ſo ignoble, that they will very ſoon ſtand in need of a genealogiſt in ordinary. I thanked the noble maker,

* In France petty criminals are burned in the ſhoulders with the mark of a flower-de-luce.

and desired to be excused from having the divine Confucius's family confounded with mine.

LETTER LXV.

The Same, to the Superintendant of Religion, at Pekin.

Paris.

AMONG the Christians †, my dear Kie touna, paradise may be purchased. The mandarins of this sect dispose of it; but the price is not always the same, varying according to the want of money in the market of religion: they, who are for coming at it cheap, go from shop to shop, and haggle a long time.

In this they are not to be blamed, it being allowable for every one to get things as cheap as they can. I have been told of a sinner, who intending to purchase heaven, applied to a convent of bonzes: they rated it at an hundred thousand masses: that he thought by much too dear, and went away to other bonzes at Paris, who are noted for supplying sinners at a reasonable rate. Accordingly they immediately fell one half, and offered him heaven for fifty thousand masses, but paid down in current specie. This was a great saving to him; yet, grudging so much money for heaven, he declined it, and tried other bonzes; but, like the first, they insisted on the full price. Not being able to suit himself, he determined to wait a more favourable opportunity; for in this sale, as in others, there are seasons, when traders fall their prices. Amidst his inquiries after the cheapest way to avoid being damned, he was informed that the Capuchin bonzes, being about the rebuilding their pagod, stood in need of money: he went to them, and they did his business for six thousand masses.

He is determined to prosecute the first bonzes, as usurers, for asking twenty times more for a thing than its worth, or than others value it at. Should he

† The Roman Catholics.

he gain his ſuit, and obtain ſix thouſand maſſes coſts, this would be no bad trick in him, as then getting paradiſe juſt for nothing.

LETTER LXVI.

The Same, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

DID the exiled miniſters here continue to enjoy the infatuated veneration paid to them before, I ſhould account their diſmiſſion a reward. Their rank, title, and fortune are entirely left to them: inſtead of being removed from the ſcene of their grandeur, it follows them into their receſs. Whatever branch of their faſtuouſneſs they think fit to leave behind, their cook they never forget: thus, amidſt high living and a continual reſort of company, they make moral reflections on the misfortune they are fallen under, of being much happier than they were before.

About twenty years ago, here was a little obſcure abbé, without rank or dignity, and his whole fortune but a hundred taels a year. Some women having introduced him at court, he was making his way very rapidly there; but in the midſt of his career, his ambition overturned him. He was diſmiſſed and exiled; however without touching his dignity and fortune; ſo that in his diſgrace he was poſſeſſed of two hundred thouſand livres a year, and all his ſeveral benefices, beſides the purple. Now what could have been done more, if, inſtead of puniſhing him, it had been intended to reward him?

The exile of miniſters in France betrays a defect in the prince's clemency, or in his juſtice. He has either too much generoſity, or is wanting in equity. If they have injured the ſtate, and made an ill uſe of their miniſtry, they are not duly puniſhed; whereas, if they are innocent, and no malverſation can be laid to their charge, they are puniſhed too much. On inquiring into the origin of the exile of miniſters, it

appears to be a *ſuccedaneum* to the penalty of death, commuted through clemency. Baniſhment being a civil death, they, who are condemned to it ſhould be ſtripped of their dignities, honours, and enjoyments; for what have the dead to do with pageantry? Nothing is neceſſary to them but a grave.

LETTER LXVII.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

THE other day I took a dinner with a French nobleman, who has an eſtate of two hundred thouſand livres a year, and is four millions in debt, which juſt makes him a nobleman without eſtate: yet he lives at the rate of two hundred thouſand livres a year.

This perſon who with all his opulence cannot afford to have a footman, keeps forty domeſtics, a ſteward and clerk of the kitchen, pages, grooms, dogs and horſes; and few noblemen have a finer table: he treats with the beſt wines in Europe; his equipages are all very rich; he goes abroad in a prince-like ſplendor, ſo that none but a conjurer could think him poorer than moſt of thoſe whom he ſpatters.

I have calculated his expence, and find, that, ſhould this nobleman live ten years longer, he will die ſix millions in debt; and then the young lord, his ſon, accounted a very rich heir, will be a hundred thouſand livres *per annum* worſe than nothing.

This rich nobleman is far from being the only poor one in Paris; it is the caſe of three fourths of the rich here; in the midſt of their ſuppoſititious opulence, their natural ſtate is indigence. The cauſe of their not being aware that they have not wherewith to live, is, that they, to whom they are indebted, allow them to live. A general meeting of creditors would reduce above half the great men to beggary: ſhould all to whom they owe inſiſt on being

ing paid, the towering edifice of their fortune would fall to pieces; at beſt, would be contracted to a cottage.

I have been aſſured that the nobility of France, who have generally large eſtates, owe more than the real value of them: if ſo, the moſt wealthy body in the ſtate is the pooreſt. The nobleman are properly no more than farmers of their lands, holding them under creditors, who, by the ready way they opened to them of contracting debts, are become proprietors of their eſtates. Should the names of thoſe, to whom their fiefs now belong, be inſerted in their antient patents, inſtead of thoſe to whom they no longer belong; then would the commoners be nobles, and the nobles commoners.

This ruining themſelves was not projected by the great men; they never would have thought of it, had not the court been the firſt to ſet them an example. It is a phrenzy derived in a right line from the prince, who is reckoned the moſt neceſſitous rich man in his kingdom. The preſent monarch's predeceſſor taught the nobility to contract debts, and run themſelves into difficulties, he himſelf borrowing from all who would lend: accordingly that great prince broke for the greateſt ſum ever known: he was ſo poor at his death, as not to leave wherewith to be buried, by two thouſand millions.

LETTER LXVIII.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ĕi, *to the Mandarin* Champi pi, *at* Paris.

Pologna.

THE Bologneſe women are generally pretty; but too near an approach to them makes ſtill greater impreſſion than love: you muſt keep at ſome diſtance from their faces, ever ſo little familiarity with their beauty cauſing excreſcences on the ſkin, which are attended with a ſmart itching. Thus their charms wound the ſkin more than the heart: however,

however ſetting aſide this *pruritus*, they are perfectly agreeable.

I could have wiſhed they had ſpoke Arabic, to have had ſome talk with them. Arabic may be ſooner learnt than the Bologneſe idiom I know ſomething of Italian; but that's out of the queſtion at Bologna, being uſed only by preachers and players.

The women and men meet every evening in by-places called *Caſſini*. I ſcarce know how to go about explaining to you what a *Caſſino* is; it is not directly a brothel, though the ſame things are frequently done there: in a word, it is a houſe hired by a certain number of men and women, to be more at liberty.

The French who improve every thing, have not yet attained to this refinement of indecency: it muſt be owned, that, as to corruption of manners, the Italians have always taken the lead of the French.

LETTER LXIX.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, *to the Mandarin* Cotao-yu-ſe, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

THE French will at any rate, have wit: you are welcome to ſenſe, capacity and erudition, if you will but allow them vivacity, keenneſs of repartees, and gaiety. A Frenchman, with fire, imagination, and a knack at ſtory-telling, and an inexhauſtible fluency in ſmall-talk, bids fair for the character of a wit; and if to theſe qualities he adds laughter at command, a vein of jocularity, and ſportive carriage, his merit is ſigned and ſealed.

A Frenchman muſt have nothing ſerious about him; a compoſed look here is accounted ſourneſs; at Paris a grave man is the moſt ſtupid creature in nature.

I was lately at a ſupper with a mixed company of Pariſians and foreigners; which gave me an opportunity

tunity of obſerving the contrariety between this people and their neighbours.

Come, my lord, ſays a French wit, jogging a ſenſible Engliſhman who ſat next to him, think to-morrow, and be merry to-day. What ſignifies, continued he, all your geometry, knowledge, and erudition, while you know not how to make uſe of them? See what wit we Frenchmen have! As for example, we have been talking away theſe four hours, without your having the leaſt thought that we have not been reflecting.

It is not given to every nation in Europe to carry the erudition of trifles to ſuch a pitch, and to be ſo deeply verſed in the ſcience of levity: this is the peculiar talent of a native Frenchman.

This humour of wit affects all ranks and conditions here; it even has got footing in the miniſtry.

I may be miſtaken, but I cannot help thinking, that the French would make greater advancements in arts and ſciences, and politics, had they a little leſs wit.

Eſpecially, let it be utterly excluded from Religion; it was the ſource of thoſe diſputes, which occaſioned the inteſtine wars, ſo fatal to the ſtate.

I would likewiſe baniſh it out of the verge of government; for from thence it is, that its bad influence has ſpread among the ſubjects.

I am even of opinion, that were there not ſo much wit in the ſovereign's council, the ſtate would be the better governed.

LETTER LXX.

The Same, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

THERE are ſome topics which I am obliged to return to, it being impoſſible to go through them in one letter. I have ſaid elſewhere, that here a woman is always hidden behind a man: ſhe ſhoves him forwards, draws him back, and makes him

ſtand ſtill, according to her drifts and deſigns. Politics, like the other ſyſtems of civil ſociety, are under the direction of this ſex.

It is ſaid that France has taken part in the preſent war, merely becauſe a woman would have it ſo; and probably her only motive for this was, to make herſelf of the greater importance by nominating to military employments. Five or ſix hundred thouſand men have been given up to tragical deaths, to entertain a lady with a war.

Juſtice, here, is of ſo fine a texture, that a pretty woman can cruſh it at pleaſure; the law flies out of court at the ſight of a beautiful ſollicitreſs. The ſex diſtributes the principal poſts of the church and the law. Priories, abbies, biſhopricks, cardinals hats, are under their dependency. Were France to nominate a pope, he would be made by a woman: they make viceroys, governors of provinces; and of them brigadiers and generals of armies hold their commiſſions. There's not a commiſſioner in the kingdom who does not owe his poſt to a woman.

The government here has an eſtabliſhed cuſtom, which all the world is appriſed of: when a man has any buſineſs at court, or in the town, he muſt find out the name and place of abode of the judge's female favourite who is to decide it, in order to apply to her, and gain her by preſents. Every other way to carry a cauſe is very uncertain; whereas this is ſure. A petition delivered by the favourite is always anſwered. As to the rate, in the ſale of juſtice, it is fixed at ſo much *per cent.* though it riſes in proportion to the iniquity of the Caſe. Every woman in favour has her department: ſome deal in penſions, others in employments; they have their offices for giving audiences, and receiving memorials.

The way of inſuring the purchaſe-price of the favour, or of the injuſtice petitioned for, is really excellent; the money is lodged with a public Mandarin, called a notary, who does not deliver it to the favourite, till ſhe has gone through with the affair.

It

It would be a great miſtake, ſhouldeſt thou imagine theſe favourites to be young perſons of extraordinary beauty: ſome of them are old matrons, and very far from having any thing of handſomeneſs in them: the title and perquiſites of favourites are allowed them as a reward for paſt ſervices, and in diſcharge of an old debt, contracted with them in the flower of their age.

The young favourites, who are in current pay, equip themſelves in all the power of dreſs, when they go to preſent any brief; and the affair is concerted in a private conference with the miniſter or judge.

But theſe ſeveral private offices have for ſome years paſt been reduced to one; the royal favourite has ſwallowed up all! Verſailles is now the place where payments of any conſequence are made. Poſts are there ſold by public auction, and every one who has money is allowed to bid. The office of intelligence is open to all; and at preſent, bargains are made there for employments, from a hundred crowns to two hundred thouſand livres a year.

LETTER LXXI.

The Same to the Mandarin Cotao-yu-ſe, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

LOVE, which muſt have been very old and battered ſince it lived in the time of Cyrus and Caſſandra *, died ſuddenly here; debauchery has proved the death of it. At preſent it is a point of gentility to deſpiſe that paſſion. To be ſuſpected of ſuch a weakneſs ruins a man's character: it only ſubſiſts among the old faſhioned folks; ſo that the courtiers and people of faſhion ſcorn it as boyiſh.

Sighs and love-letters are no more heard of; thoſe modes of explaining one's ſelf are antiquated.

But there being ever ſome women, who ſtill follow the old way, a faſhionable Frenchman always

* Two old Romances.

keeps a domeſtic to anſwer love-letters; ſo that this part of the ſecretaryſhip of the heart is now in ſuch diſrepute as to be committed to a valet.

Love has not ſo much as a place in the romances; a kind of books originally conſiſting of the analyſis of it, and the ſubſtance of which was its follies; but now in France there is no more love, not even in fiction.

However, ſo much the better; for, after all, love was come to be mere cheating. It has been ſuperſeded by intrigue, which, to ſpeak the truth, is not much better, except that now every body knows what he is about. Both parties frankly deceive each other; whereas, in love, they generally deceived each other without being ſenſible of it; not to mention the trouble of love itſelf, and the infinite pains which muſt be taken to pleaſe the beloved object.

It was farther attended with a multitude of moſt troubleſome formalities. Immediately, they were mutually to aſſure each other of an eternal love; both were to ſeem to believe each other; next, they were jointly to labour to perſuade themſelves of it; afterwards, they were to give convincing proofs of it: now all this required great aſſiduity and addreſs. Nor is this all: the ſuitor was to be habitually engaging, ſweet-tempered, polite, complaiſant, watchful to ſeize every opportunity of obliging: now this muſt have been a very great reſtraint.

Intrigue is perfectly plain and ſimple, goes directly to the point without the tediouſneſs of preliminaries, or the delays of circumlocution. An intrigue of eight days ſtanding is reckoned old: intrigue may be ſaid to be without a beginning, for it begins at the the end; which is very convenient for thoſe who hate loitering.

I forgot to tell thee of another inconveniency in love: it always was at a great deal of pains to conceal itſelf, whereas the preſent mode of intrigue goes bare-faced.

LET-

LETTER LXXII.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, *to the Mandarin* Kie-tou-na, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

ALL the time I have been at Paris, I never heard a ſingle word about the queen of France: though I mentioned, in one of my letters, that the monarch reigning here is married, I cannot tell whether he has a wife. Yet I have been aſſured that France had a queen; but ſhe makes ſo little noiſe as not to be heard. She is never ſeen in the king's council or cabinet. So far from dazzling any one with her ſplendor, ſhe has not a ray of light near her. Magnificence is not her ſphere; ſhe is out of the buſtle of this ſhowy court. She has left the high-way of grandeur for the path of privacy; ſhe has reſigned her life with dignity; ſhe has laid down her rank at the altar; and God, to whom ſhe has offered up her crown, has richly compenſated her for ſuch a glorious ſacrifice, changing her afflictions into ſolacements: and very happy is this for the king and the ſtate. There are queens in Europe, whom, in ſuch circumſtances religion would not have made ſo very eaſy.

LETTER LXXIII.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

HERE is a miniſter * who has ſurvived all the others without diſgrace, or exile. Being a lover of the fair ſex, and of an eaſy turn of mind, he ſtruck in with her who governed the ſtate. The marchioneſs's gown had ſaved him from ſhipwreck; her protection is the plank to which he owes his ſafety.

At

* The late Marſhal Belleiſle.

At preſent he drivels, and is no longer the ſame man; but, before he became civilly dead, he was the miniſter of all France, who knew the moſt and the leaſt. He has paſſed through all degrees and likewiſe through all the honours which the greateſt man of the republic can expect. He has been an ambaſſador, plenipotentiary, a general officer, and is a knight of all the king's orders, a marſhal of France, a duke, &c. Had the favours, conferred on him for ſervices which he has not performed, been withheld, they might very well reward twenty brave officers for ſervices which they had really performed.

I have heard there is not his fellow in the world for waſting a large army in a foreign country, for poſting it amiſs, making it advance when it ſhould draw back, and for ordering it to retire as injudiciouſly; in a word, for thoroughly ruining it, and then returning to court almoſt alone. He is highly praiſed for an orderly retreat he made; but the having once turned his back prudently, is no very ſhining article in the hiſtory of a general.

His maſter-piece lay in details: never did commander's head contain ſo many *minutiæ*. In Europe, moſt men are miſplaced. This marſhal duke would have made an incomparable director of the forage; not a truſs of hay would have eſcaped him; whereas, he is put at the head of the war-office. This indeed has its details; but wide is the difference between the details of ſmall matters and of great; and the contracted ſpeculations about the ſubſiſtence of armies are not to come into competition with the elevated genius required in thoſe who conduct military operations. Accordingly he is ſaid to have ſpun a fine thread there in that poſt.

Though ſomething turned of ſeventy, he ſtill ſets up for a beau and gallant. This weakneſs, however, is overlooked; but what is inſupportable in him, is his conceiting himſelf equal to the weight which cruſhes him.

This miniſter's dignities will end in him, he having no iſſue: he is the firſt general of his family, and the laſt

laſt duke. It is ſaid that he will make Lewis XV. his heir: his riches are indeed immenſe; yet it will be no gift, but only rather the diſcharge of a family-debt: a grandfather plundered the ſtate, and the grandſon makes reſtitution.

LETTER LXXIV.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, *to the Mandarin* Champi-pi, *at* Paris.

Bologna.

I Cannot think how the miniſters of Chriſt reconcile ſuch haughtineſs and oſtentation with the charity and meekneſs ſo much recommended in that religion.

Didſt thou but ſee the parade of the mandarin prieſt, or legate, whom Rome ſends here as its deputy governor, thou wouldſt be amazed at the contradiction between his practice and the maxims of his profeſſion.

Our ſubiime emperor does not appear in public with more pomp and magnificence than this prieſt of the Chriſtian ſect.

He is attended by a body of horſe-guards not leſs than that of the king of France: his chariot is drawn by ſix black horſes all covered with plates of gold; beſides a train of fine coaches for his ſecretaries, ſteward, gentlemen, or valets de chambre.

This cavalcade moves very ſlowly, and the people may the longer admire its ſplendour, and the maſter enjoy his pride in their adorations; for, when ever he paſſes, the Bologneſe proſtrate themſelves before his eminence.

This mandarin is abſolute; I may ſay, more deſpotic than the Great Turk; baniſhing and putting to death at pleaſure.

Would it not be better to have expoſed themſelves to all the horrors of domeſtic ſervitude, than have ſtooped to ſuch abaſement?

Yet

Yet this is not all: the ſtate undergoes many other calamities, the legates being but ſhort-lived ſovereigns: their commiſſion is only ſexennial, and this occaſions a continual peculation; for every legate, knowing that in a little time he ſhall be no longer ſo, makes hay while the ſun ſhines, according to the European phraſe; ſelling favours of all kinds, and ſqueezing money out of every thing: for this he has the pope's warrant; and thus Bologna is a prey to the deſpotiſm of Rome, and the rapacity of its miniſters.

LETTER LXXV.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, *to the Mandarin* Kiptou-na, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

I Was preſent the other day, at a ſolemn *Te Deum* ſung in *Notre-Dame* church. The muſic conſiſted of great variety of inſtruments, played by capital hands; ſo that all the company were in raptures, and the vaults rung with ſounds of joy and triumph.

This is a thankſgiving uſually paid to God for an advantage in war not gained, or for a victory only of the miniſtry's forging. There is not a *Te Deum* which does not coſt the nation eight or ten thouſand men; and, for theſe advantages, God is very frequently thanked; that is, the more the ſtate ſuffers, the more they praiſe the Lord for its proſperity. Indeed, as to the laſt action for which France has returned thanks to heaven, the French did remain maſters of the field of battle, and had the glory of burying their dead; for the Chriſtian *Te Deums* will ſuit any events.

This thankſgiving is always attended with much weeping; for, amidſt theſe public rejoicings, two or three thouſand diſtreſſed widows go into mourning, and make the air ring with cries and lamentations. Were this muſic to be joined in chorus with that

that of the church, the ſymphony would be none of the moſt melodious.

However, there being nothing here, but what has its uſe, ſo theſe *Te Deums* are good for ſomething: they lead the people into a perſuaſion, that the arms of France carry all before them; which comforts them under the former taxes, and prepares them for additional ones.

LETTER LXXVI.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

MORALITY, the natural tendency of which is to correct the vanity of the human mind, is here made a ſource of pride and oſtentation. In France, books are a branch of luxury: they are not ſatisfied with having monkeys, parrots, and Chineſe baboons; they muſt likewiſe have moraliſts and philoſophers A fine gentleman at Paris could not appear in public with any credit, had he not his books and libraries to talk of; it is now an eſſential piece of furniture among people of faſhion.

Thou wilt readily conceive, that a nobleman, with a library only for faſhion, has not leiſure enough to ſpend much time in it. His books are cloſe priſoners, debarred of all communication with any one. To the age in which they are collected they are ſuperfluous; and the worms hinder their being uſeful to poſterity. Were this the only evil reſulting to ſociety from the luxury of books, it would be no great matter; but it affects the public morals: it is with the productions of the mind as with thoſe of the earth; a large conſumption raiſes the price: a great number of theſe oſtentatious pieces of furniture keeps up the price of books, ſo that they, who have a real need of them, are not able to ſupply themſelves. The ſuperfluous libraries in France may be ſaid to hinder the foundation or increaſe of ſuch as are neceſſary.

Very

Very few here have where-with to buy books, but thoſe who never look into hem.

This luxury, together with that of large tracts of land without any produce, ſhould be ſuppreſſed: I mean, no perſon ſhould be allowed to have a uſeleſs library, or uncultivated land.

LETTER LXXVII.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

AMONG the Aſiatics, death terminates life; but here life ends not at death: painting in ſome meaſure gives a ſurvivance. Many Frenchmen live three or four centuries among their progeny. This capital is full of people whoſe trade is, to make faces. Moſt of the apartments exhibit deceaſed perſons: I have been in ſeveral great houſes, where I have been ſhewn a complete ſeries of defuncts, as a moſt valuable curioſity; and not ſeldom even from the tenth generation. Some families have life ſo much at heart, that, had not the worms eaten them up a ſecond time, they would have been living in painting, from father to ſon, ever ſince the deluge.

The financiers, and a ſet of men called farmers general, alone ſhew any great modeſty in this article: the picturesque hiſtory of their family always begins with them, as if their anceſtors had no faces; you ſee the ſon's picture, but never that of the father.

Amidſt all the encouragement given to the polite arts, painting is become ſo diminiſhed as to be almoſt imperceptible. There is now no ſeeing the beauties of a face without a microſcope: in this miniature, as it is called, the beauty toaſted all over the univerſe is often repreſented within half an inch diameter.

Men however are extremely delighted with this contraction; as thus they put a pretty woman in a ſnuff-box, and carry a beauty in their pockets, beſides the high pleaſure of viewing their miſtreſs in a ring:

ring: this is a kind of continual enjoyment: for, on any motion of the finger, her enchanting features meet their eye, and thus impart raptures to their enamoured heart.

Formerly, two perſons united by love, could not leave one another and be together.

At preſent, a lover may leave his miſtreſs, and go to the other end of the world; yet enjoy her company, and even lie with her.

LETTER LXXVIII.

The Same, to the Mandarin Cotao-yu-ſe, *at Pekin.*

Paris.

OUR cuſtom in Aſia, of confining women to the houſe, keeps them from forming any other deſign, than that of pleaſing their huſbands: a moſt wiſe regulation, and which, if advantageous to men, is ſtill more ſo to the women.

I was, the other day, in a mixed aſſembly, where a great number of women were to be preſent, on a rivalry in beauty, and to know which ſhould have the preference above all the others; this being the plan of thoſe rendezvouſes where women are admitted.

The company were beginning to form when I came in. At firſt a woman of a very pretty appearance engroſſed the looks of all the men: her clear complexion and fine eyes were particularly admired; and the delight this preference gave her was eaſily ſeen; the joy of her ſoul broke out in her looks: but ſhort was her triumph; a lady coming in ſoon after, totally eclipſed her: every eye was fixed on the latter, and the former ſunk into diſregard. Here I perceived her delight turned into rancour; her eyes betrayed her inward torture; her looks loſt all that ſweetneſs ſo admired but an inſtant before; indignation altered her very features.

This ſecond now felt the ſame exultation as the former; when a third, coming into the aſſembly, threw her into the like agitations; and the latter had

had no ſooner begun to triumph in the homage paid to her, than a fourth reduced her to a level with the two former.

This tranſition from the moſt lively joy to the moſt piercing mortification, made me reflect how happy our Chineſe women are in not being expoſed to theſe ſudden revolutions, which raiſe ſuch tempeſts in the ſoul.

But theſe tranſitory mortifications are nothing in compariſon of that conſtant vexation, which the ſex go through here in their advanced age. Of all creatures, the moſt deſpiſed here is an old woman. Nature ſhudders, all the ſenſes are diſguſted, at the very word. No mental accompliſhment, nor quality, has yet been diſcovered in women to compenſate for age: unhappily for them, youth is a flower of very ſhort duration; whereas old age laſts, as it were, all their life.

The childhood of European women ends at fifteen, and their old age begins at thirty; that is, they die within three luſtres after their birth; for that part of life, paſſed in grief and vexation at being no longer what they were, cannot well be reckoned living.

Our Chineſe women know nothing of theſe torturing ſenſations: their youth uſually terminating with that of the men to whom they are united, it almoſt always falls out that the juvenile ebullitions of the paſſions ſubſide to affection, which, by not being ſo impetuous, is the more ſolid and equable. The Women of Europe may be ſaid to end when thoſe of Aſia begin, and to die at a time when theſe are, as it were, born again.

LET-

LETTER LXXIX.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, *to the Mandarin* Cham-pi-pi, *at* Paris.

Bologna.

THE Europeans have an irresistable fondness for transplantation: here are colleges of Germans, Spaniards, and other nations, whose natural capacity much exceeds that of the Bolognese.

I know few things more detrimental to a state, than foundations, which imply a transplantation; for, if any advantage lies in the climate, foreigners are not benefited by it; and, if there be no such advantage, these foundations may as well be made at home.

Arts and sciences are of the growth of all countries: they are universal plants, which, with cultivation, will thrive every where.

Besides voluntary banishing one's self from one's country, which is always detrimental to the community of which one is a member, there are many other inconveniencies.

By frequenting foreigners, a travelled student brings into his country such vices as do more harm to society, than all the sciences, which he went abroad to learn, can do good.

These emigrations might be allowable at a time when the arts had been improved only in two or three nations; but now, in this general spread of knowledge, with little or no difference as to countries, it is not worth while going abroad for what one may have at home, both cheaper and more useful.

The people of these countries, one and all, affect foundations; they are the humour of sovereigns, and the folly of private persons. Some shall spend their whole life in raking and scraping up wealth to found a college, of no more use to the founder than to those for whom it is founded.

This

This is founding to no purpose, and labouring in vain for posterity.

LETTER LXXX.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, *to the Mandarin* Kiotou-na, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

WHETHER the princes of Europe are of a different nature from common men, I know not; but it is certain, that they eat and drink more than others.

The victualling of the royal family of France would serve a whole army. A hundred Indian princes would live like princes, only on the remains of Lewis the Fifteenth's table. I have not been able to come at the knowledge, whether this monarch, and his son the dauphin, together with the queen his spouse, have ostriches stomachs; but never were devoured such quantities of pheasants, quails, snipes, partridges, turkies, ortolans, geese, ducks, and capons, beside the incredible loads of butchers meat. There are every day brought into this kitchen, as appears by the accounts of the purveyor and comptroller, which to be sure are very exact, five or six thousand winged creatures.

The king of France's kickshaws cost the state incredible sums.

Another very large expence is the desserts. A genealogist, hearing that the apples alone, every year, amounted to thirty thousand livres, fell to investigating, whether the present reigning branch of the Bourbons was not originally descended from some old Norman family: another, being informed that a hundred thousand bottles of Burgundy, and the like number of Champaign, were annually drank in his palace, was inclined to believe it derives its pedigree from some Swiss canton. It is impossible that a sovereign can keep such a table, but that of his subjects must be curtailed.

This

This monarch's blood ſhould be very ſweet by the account of his expence in ſugar: he conſumes thirty thouſand hundred weight a year. And, when I think on his coffee, I cannot conceive how he does to ſleep, his uſual doſe being two hundred weight a day.

The other powers, who envy his grandeur, cannot taunt him with ſpending the night in the dark: the lights for his palace at Verſailles coſt two millions; yet I believe the comptroller of his houſhold receives greater pleaſure from them than the maſter.

Not long ſince, there was a talk of reforming all theſe exceſſes; but I have been told, that ſuch a ſaving would have affected great numbers of people in the ſervice of the court, who are not paid ſufficiently to be reſtrained from robbing and pilfering; and that it was better to wink at theſe irregularities, than to put a ſtop to them: to which it was added, that theſe monopolies, being of a long ſtanding, and the time of ſuppreſſing them elapſed, come within preſcription.

LETTER LXXXI.

The Same, to the Mandarin Prime Miniſter, at Pekin.

Paris.

IF a miniſter of ſtate in France is faulty in the duties of his office, and thus endangers the monarchy, he is baniſhed.

If a general of an army takes wrong ſteps, expoſes a large body of troops to needleſs danger; if he laviſhes the blood of the ſubjects unadviſedly, and thus becomes a traitor to his country; his puniſhment is ready, he is forbid the court; that is, his penalty conſiſts in ſeeing his ſovereign no more: a ſentence little anſwerable to his demerits. Hence it is, that delinquents are ſo very common in France, when the puniſhment is not proportionable to the crime, this only increaſes the number of criminals.

A place-

A placeman tries whether a premeditated ſtroke of ambition will turn out well to him, and goes about ſelling the monarchy for his private advantage. If detected, the worſt is, his being prevented from executing his deſign, by the loſs of his employment.

A commander ventures on a ſignal feat againſt all the rules of the art of war; he will try, whether by the blood of fifty thouſand men, he cannot make his way to a marſhal's ſtaff. Who can tell? Fortune favours the bold: and ſhould he miſcarry, and the madneſs of his attempt be ſeen into, he is only diſmiſſed. The breach of his duty offers a brilliant prize, and he loſes little or nothing if his crime be diſcovered; of courſe he chuſes the firſt.

Theſe exiles are not ſo much as laſting puniſhments: a great man is no ſooner forbid the court than his friends are at work to procure his return; all have their partizans to palliate their crimes: at length, the prince allows them to come and plead their cauſe in perſon, and then there is no danger of their being caſt.

Many a general, after being put under an arreſt, and carried priſoner to a caſtle, has, the very next year, been ſeen at the head of an army, as if nothing had happened, and goes on in his former miſconduct.

With the eaſtern princes it is a maxim to put to death thoſe who miſbehave in the employments they are intruſted with. A bad miniſter loſes his life, and a general's head anſwers for the operations of the campaign, and likewiſe for the army committed to his command.

Theſe puniſhments, far from being barbarous, as they are called in Europe, are a national right, a ſtrict juſtice, and the more equitable for being ſevere. It may eaſily be proved, that the leaſt malverſations of miniſters and generals are high treaſon of the worſt ſort, and ſhould be puniſhed capitally.

There can be no petty treſpaſſes in poſts where the fate of a whole nation is depending; every fault deſerves death.

The

The divan of Conſtantinople ſtrangles a general for the loſs of a battle, though fought according to all the rules of military art. This I own unjuſt: ſtill it is a document to another general, to be exceeding circumſpect, and to make uſe of all the means which human prudence can ſuggeſt, as the lives of ſo many ſubjects lie at ſtake.

Did the courts of Europe follow the Turkiſh method, both miniſters and generals would do their duty better.

LETTER LXXXII.

The Mandarin Cham-ti-pi, *to the Mandarin* Cotao-yu-ie, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

OF all the revolutions in Paris, t' oſe which happen in the diſtrict of voluptuouſneſs are the moſt ſudden and ſurpriſing.

Every half year the vicious world ſhifts its appearance; the profligate women, who were buried in the grave of their guilt, riſe again, and are placed on the throne of lewdneſs.

As I was taking a turn with the chevalier in the great walk of Palais Royal, pointing at a woman dreſſed in a gold tiſſue, covered with diamonds, and a prince leading her, Do you ſee that woman? ſaid he: it is not above ſix months ago when ſhe was common to footmen, but ſoon came to be preferred to the embraces of their maſters; and, after being hackneyed by them, the great men of the court were ſmitten with her; and now ſhe is the doxy of a prince of the blood. Would you think that it is now the high taſte; and that taking a woman from a common bawdy-houſe, raiſing her to the top of female parade, erecting an altar to her, and thus venerating ordure and infamy, is refined voluptuouſneſs?

To be intitled to this faſhionable *apotheoſis*, a creature muſt have paſſed through all the degrees of notorious

notorious proſtitution: French ſenſuality, at preſent, cannot reliſh a woman who is not experienced in the whole courſe of debauchery.

This taſte, added he, is no better than that of the moſt filthy beaſts, who take a delight in rolling themſelves about in the mire.

The annals of the debaucheries of this city would make a complete body of pollution: ſuch a book might be called the Hiſtory of the Creation of the Dunghill.

LETTER LXXXIII.

The Same, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

MY attention to get a knowledge of every inſtitution on which the Europeans value themſelves, lately induced me to go and take a view of a new foundation, here called the military ſchool. It is indeed a vaſt building, and may be called a kind of workhouſe; where the conductors of ſieges and battles are to ſerve an apprenticeſhip, before they formally make their appearance on the theatre of honour.

This plan has ſo many conveniencies, and the nurſlings of Mars are ſo very much at their eaſe in this military ſeminary, that the inſtitution may be ſaid to have placed the copy a thouſand leagues diſtant from the original.

Every thing in this martial foundation is ſingular; but not the leaſt of its ſingularities is its being projected by the moſt peaceable man in France.

A financier was the ſchemer; and for this purpoſe he aſked leave of the king to ſet up a monopoly †. Every martial diſciple will be the ruin of ſeveral families; and the military ſchool, founded to prevent the devaſtations of the enemy, will be the firſt in ravaging the kingdom.

† The military-ſchool lottery.

I do

I do not find any one foundation in France, but what is in reality a national detriment.

LETTER LXXXIV.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

YESTERDAY morning, just as I was going out, two men, in a very odd garb, came into my room. They told me, that they were religious men of such an order, and that, being on their departure for China, they came to receive my commands

Fathers, said I to them, may I know the motive of your voyage? Sir, answered one of them, with a very mild voice, and in a way which shewed great self-complacence, I am going to convert your countrymen to the holy church. That is, replied I, you undertake a voyage of six thousand leagues, to root out, from the hearts of the sincere, quiet Chinese, the principles of their excellent religion, to disturb their consciences, and extinguish the patriotic virtues in them; for this is the case when a subject, of whatever country changes his belief; and it is no more than a natural effect. A strange undertaking indeed! said I, and withal far from having any christianity in it; for I have heard that your religion is all good-will and charity; and I am sure, that to go and hurt people who never hurt them, savours little of those excellent qualities.

The same religious man was going to reply, and visibly with less temper, when I myself went on, in the same manner. What would you say of two mandarins, who should come from Pekin to Paris, purely to preach Confucius's religion? You would, and justly, account it a most ridiculous project; and you could not forbear looking on them as brain-sick fanatics.

If you will go, fathers, even go: I have no commands for you, nor any favours to ask of you; but

you would do much better to remain in your convents, according to your vows. With theſe words I diſmiſſed them: and I perceived my expoſtulation a little ruffled their Chriſtian meekneſs.

The ſociety of theſe ſeducers is divided into two branches; one, whom I have already mentioned, makes it their buſineſs to pervert conſciences in Europe; and tho other croſſes the ſeas, in order to impoſe on thoſe in Aſia.

LETTER LXXXV.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, *to the Mandarin* Champi-pi, *at* Paris.

Bologna.

IN the countries under the pope's dominion, the greateſt curioſities are relics. Some bonzes gave me an invitation to go and ſee the head of a ſaint called St. Dominic. No foreigner is admitted to this ſight, without ſome aſſurance, that he does not practiſe any part of ſurgery; a cardinal having once, under pretence of a mighty deſire to view the ſaint's head, plucked a tooth out of it, and, putting it in a gold box, made off with his booty.

Since that time, the bonzes who have this head in their keeping, endeavour to be on their guard againſt operators, as otherwiſe the teeth might ſoon be gone; and then who knows but ſome raſh or ignorant viſitor might carry off a jaw?

After this natural relic I was ſhewn an artificial one; I mean, the picture of Chriſt's mother; which is once every year carried in proceſſion. Her uſual reſidence inſtead of Bologna, is on a mountain about a league from the city.

Leſt any foul weather might come on whilſt ſhe is on the road, a portico has been made from her altar to the city-gates; ſo that whatever rain the ſun ſends, it would not wet the mother.

The natives of the country ſay, that this picture was done by St. Luke, a cotemporary of Chriſt, which

is

is near eighteen hundred years ago. If ſo, it is the father of all the pictures in the world; but ſome evil-minded critics will have it that the painter was dead fifteen hundred years before the picture was thought of.

However it be, Chriſt's mother in this picture is an auburn beauty, with a pretty noſe, large eyes, a ſmall mouth, white teeth, roſy lips, &c. &c. which, farther, is a proof that female beauty has not loſt an inch of ground theſe eighteen hundred years, the fineſt women being to this day drawn with thoſe attributes.

LETTER LXXXVI.

The Mandarin Chan-pi-pi, *to the Mandarin* Kie-tou-na, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

THE king of France has fixed the number of preſſes in his dominions; I mean that no more than ſix times more bad works have been printed than are read. It is to the humour of regulations that this edict is to be imputed; and the effect of it has been, to enrich ſome privileged individuals, and ruin many others. It is not the number of preſſes which does any harm, but the prodigious number of idle citizens who, from the want of other buſineſs, turn authors.

What is here called edicts never aſcends to the ſource of the miſchief they would correct; they, as it were, only graze the ſkin of the conſtitution. The remedy uſed is almoſt ever productive of a new diſtemper, and generally more dangerous than that intended to be cured. Printing ſhould have been allowed, and writing forbid.

As the monarchical government extends its deſpotic inquiſition to the very thoughts, why ſhould it not be extended to thoſe by which ſociety may be hurt? A heap of books, the products of a wild imagination, are daily printed here: now the govern-

ment ſhould begin by prohibiting theſe: cannot a ſtate make a better uſe of its rags, than to feed idleneſs and promote immorality.

LETTER LXXXVII.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

THE French government is very ſtrict againſt the publication of writings dangerous to religion, morals, and politics; only works thoroughly orthodox are allowed to be printed: but licentious authors have a ſure way for getting their compoſitions into the world, without hazarding a breach of the laws; they commit their traſh to paper, and ſend it to an adjacent country called Holland, where they are printed, and afterwards circulated through France. This is without the verge of the French government, and ſo the impious writers openly ſhew themſelves every where, as if nothing was the matter.

The European princes, amidſt their many uſeleſs conventions, generally forget the moſt eſſential. Both ſides reſtore priſoners, and refuſe ſhelter to certain criminals; yet they tolerate licentious, atheiſtical, and immoral writings, which, by corrupting the people, debaſe a ſtate; that is, they allow of the very worſt ſort of high treaſon.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

IN one of my former I mentioned ſome women here, who ſpend their whole life in travelling, who are always in a carriage, and who owe their virtue to perpetual motion. But here is another ſpecies, who do not ſhift places ſo often, yet are not leſs abſent from themſelves. Theſe may be called the

the ſedentary idlers; their indolence employs them always too much for love to faſten on their hearts: they have juſt time enough to ſpend their lives in doing nothing. Here is the journal of ſuch a lady.

She riſes at nine: her dreſſer, who knows the watch-word, comes into her chamber, and lays hold of her head: till eleven ſhe continues under his comb. She then proceeds to her toilette, where ſhe ſpends a full hour in completing her dreſs, and puting the finiſhing hand to her charms. Then comes the muſic maſter, who takes up another hour; and he is ſucceeded by Mr. Rigadoon, the dancing-maſter, who, taking out his kit, makes madam walk a minuet, and dance two *paſs pieds*: this exerciſe runs away with another hour; and now it is dinner-time, which is at leaſt a buſineſs of two hours. From the table ſhe goes to her coach a viſiting, and makes one at the card-table till ſix, when the play calls her away: this brings on nine o'clock; then for the table again, where ſhe eats, ſings, laughs, and frolics, till midnight, her uſual bed-time.

On a calculation of this lady's life, divided into twenty-four hours a day, I find that ſhould ſhe live twelve luſtres, ſhe will have ſpent exactly five years with her dreſſer, four years at her looking-glaſs, three years with her muſic-maſter, the like number with her dancing-maſter, ſix years at cards, twenty years at table, and thirty in bed.

LETTER LXXXIX.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

A Prince of the royal blood, being lately out a ſhooting, killed a ſubject of the king of France, and, it is ſaid, only by way of trying his piece, and proving the barrel. The poor man was put into the ground, and, the next day, the prince made a laughing-matter of this adventure with the court-lords.

It reached his majesty's ear, but without his taking any notice of it, there being no laws here to hinder the great from killing their inferiors; or, if there is, the despotism of rank quashes all observance of them; which is tantamount to there being none.

Wretched government, where the people have no protector against violence and tyranny, and where the prince himself cannot secure his subjects lives!

I frequently rejoice at being born in a society, where the constitution animadverts on such barbarities, and all the outrages of cruel pride. Our institution of censors fences us from the like violences. The life of the meanest subject in China is as safe as that of the highest; and should a prince of the royal blood kill any individual, though of the lowest class, the censors would immediately make a report of it to the court, in order to his being proceeded against according to the severity of the laws; and, on a disregard of such report, the consequence would be, either the punishment of the prince, or the dethronement of the emperor.

LETTER XC.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, *to the Superintendant of Religion at* Pekin.

Paris.

WERE I put to my choice of several religions, I should prefer that which is most suitable to the duties of a member of society; it being reasonable to believe that God, as the creator of society, has adapted his doctrine to the perpetuation of this union, and not to its decay or destruction.

Whatever religion we profess, we are to restore to Nature what it lent us: it made us men, and we should contribute to the increase of the species: so that a religion, which cramps the sacredness of marriages, is suspicious.

The catholic religion may be said to have done every thing in its power for extinguishing that lawful

ful propagation of mankind, to which itſelf owes its exiſtence: it teaches, that he who marries does well, but that he who does not marry does better. There are at preſent in Europe three millions of thorough good catholics, who, for that very reaſon, are bad citizens.

A ſect, whoſe ritual tends to the impair of the human ſpecies, is working its own deſtruction. It may be geometrically demonſtrated, that had the Roman catholic religion, ſuch as it now is, been eſtabliſhed ſix thouſand years before its promulgation, there would by this time have been no people remaining in Europe, and conſequently no religion.

Nor is this the only exception againſt this communion; the prodigious multitude of ceremonies makes its followers ſuperſtitious, and herein it hurts ſociety; for, of all vices, ſuperſtition is that by which the mind is moſt enervated and debaſed.

Its imagery cauſes an intellectual debility, which, communicating itſelf to the ſoul, ſlackens the alertneſs and vigour neceſſary for the diſcharge of the more difficult obligations of civil life.

The great number of ſaints, whoſe feſtivals are continually recurring, cut the thread of public induſtry, and infect the mind with an indolence productive of a thouſand evils.

Another inconvenience of this ſect, perhaps, may be that prodigious train of mental prayers directed to heaven, but never riſing above the earth.

I could find in my heart to ſay, that the Roman catholics pray to God too much, but do not love him enough; for, did they love him, they would have a greater regard to his work; I mean, that civil ſociety in which he cauſed them to be born.

LETTER XCI.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, *to the Mandarin* Champi-pi, *at* Paris.

Bologna.

DIVINE worſhip here is very gay; nothing can be more exhilarating than the public acts of devotion, as performed in churches. Moſt of the prayers addreſſed to the Supreme Being are accompanied with muſic. The hymns are pricked down, and played in cadence. Almoſt all the benedictions, which God gives to his people, are pronounced with ſymphony and thorough-baſs. The mercy of heaven is implored in quavers, and every muſical exertion of the voice. They ſpeak to God in the ſame manner as to their miſtreſs.

I lately went to what here is called a high maſs: at my coming into the church I really thought I was at the opera; at leaſt there is no difference as to the compoſition. Introits, ſymphonies, minuets, rigadoons, ſolos, duos, choruſes, drums, trumpets, kettle-drums, French-horns, hautboys, violins, fifes, flagelets, *&c. &c.* in a word, every part of theatrical muſic had its part in this act of devotion.

It was a maſter-piece of impiety. Had the compoſer intended a maſs for the Goddeſs of Voluptuouſneſs, he could not have made uſe of ſofter ſounds, or more laſcivious modulations. No Chriſtian can be preſent at this joyous ſacrifice, but he muſt with the utmoſt gaiety of heart, reſolve to love God. And that this ſhow might the more reſemble a theatrical exhibition, a ſtage was built at the farther end of the church, for the muſicians to act the maſs.

The tunes of this divine ſolemnity could not fail of making impreſſions on the audience, being taken from the moſt vulgar and obſcene ballads only altering the words.

Eſpecially there is a hymn addreſſed to the Deity, the ſecond verſe of which begins with theſe Latin words,

words, *Tantum ergo*, which is always highly entertaining.

The first performance is a melting and voluptuous *adagio*, inclining the mind to softness; then comes an *allegro*, which disperses that languor, and imparts a lively hilarity; it concludes with the brisk and precipitate measures of the rigadoon, which, in Europe, excites the hearers to dance more than any other air.

All the saints of paradise have their particular serenades: on the days consecrated to the celebration of their festival, they are honoured with a great deal of fiddling in the pagods called by their name, to the extreme diversion, and, no doubt, edification, of good Christians.

LETTER XCII.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, *to the Mandarin* Kie-tou-na, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

THE following piece appeared a few days ago in the great walk of the garden of Palais-Royal, where the malecontents regularly get together, to carp at the administration. It is looked upon as a censure on the taxes, which are daily increased, yet without any diminution of the public's misfortunes, and is inscribed to the comptroller general, as president of the council of ways and means for raising money

" Memorial for augmenting the Revenues of the " Crown of France, and supplying the govern- " ment's present Wants, offered to his Excellency " the Comptroller-General.

" May it please your Excellency.

" The project, which I do myself the honour to " lay before you, is one of the most solid which has " yet appeared, though built in the air.

" Many are the impoſts which have been laid on " luxury, the conveniences of life, and on every " thing in general, which has a relation to pleaſure: " whence is it then that none has been laid on that " which is the greateſt pleaſure of all? I mean, " talking.

" The more richly a perſon dreſſes, the greater " his number of ſervants, or the more ſumptuous " table he keeps, the more he pays to the ſtate; " whereas he may talk from morning till night, with- " out paying a ſingle penny. The more he ſhines " abroad, the more is he taxed; yet his ſhining in " a company by his wit, ſubjects him to no tax.

" To bring the taxes to a kind of equality, and " ſupply the preſent neceſſities of the ſtate, there is " but one way, *viz.* taxing words: but women ex- " cepted; for, without ſuch an exception, all the fa- " milies in the kingdom would be ruined in twenty- " four hours.

" Yet muſt the manner of levying this duty be " ſuch, that the nation may not intirely loſe the uſe " of ſpeech; for there is not in nature a more ſtu- " pid animal than a mute Frenchman: he has ſcarce " any dumb ſcenes. An Italian can expreſs himſelf " for ten years together without talking: he has, " for this end, diſtortions, geſticulations, and gri- " maces; whereas the Frenchman cannot ſay a " word without his tongue. My plan is this. I " have calculated, that a man may make a decent " figure in company with three thouſand ſix hundred " words a day: ſo that the ſurplus ſhould be taxed " by an arret, at the rate of a livre for every word " over and above the ſaid number, and three livres " for two; as it is not the proportion of words " which ſhould be the rule here, but that of the itch " of ſpeaking.

" The chief offices for raiſing this duty ſhould be " at the public coffee-houſes, as the produce there " would be greateſt: aſſembly rooms would alſo be " proper places: idlers by profeſſion, who have no-

" thing

" thing to do but to talk, would pay conſiderably:
" large ſums would alſo come in from lovers; and
" the preachers alone would fill the king's coffers:
" the *recreations* of the monks would alſo prove a
" good fund: counſellors, attornies, and other
" limbs of the law, who always ſay ſix words in-
" ſtead of one, would, in this reſpect, be good
" members of ſociety: then likewiſe the impertı-
" nent garrulity of the pleaders, who are continual-
" ly talking of their proceſſes, would turn to the
" public emolument.

" The great genuiſes and fine ſpeakers would al-
" ſo incur a multitude of fines.

" This tax ſhould be levied by the Carthuſian fa-
" thers, who by their diſcipline being devoted to ſi-
" lence, conſequently know the true value of uſe-
" leſs words. Thus, Sir, would the king of France
" become the richeſt potentate in the univerſe; for
" do not imagine that ſuch an ordinance would
" tongue-tie a French-man; they love talking too
" well for that; it would only be drawing their
" purſe-ſtrings.

" According to my computations, (excluſive of
" women, children, old men, and ideots, who can-
" not be debarred from ſpeaking) this tax may be
" farmed out at a million of livres *per diem*, includ-
" ing the four ſous *per* livre for levying it."

LETTER XCIII.

The Same, to the Mandarin Cotao-yu-ſe, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

THE king of France muſt be a wonderful magician: only his fixing his eyes on an object produces an apparent total change in it.

Here the prince's favour turns vices to virtues, gives a luſtre to the complexion, heightens beauty, and imparts genius, wit, and knowledge, amidſt all the defects of nature and education.

A wo-

A woman, who before could not manage her houſhold, ſuddenly becomes capable of governing the kingdom.

The prepoſſeſſion cauſed by royal favour is ſuperior to every other: it is the univerſal worſhip in France; the French make it their very religion, tho' ſome heretics there are even in this article.

I was lately in a company, where the qualities of a certain lady now in favour, were extolled to the ſkies: a gentleman, who had patiently heard this declamation to the very end, ſaid to the encomiaſts, Come, come, gentlemen, ſtay till the ſpell of prepoſſeſſion be broke, and then I ſhall be glad to hear you pronounce definitively on thoſe ſublime endowments and virtues which you now ſo fluently exalt.

Should this way of ſuſpending one's judgment on perſons in high ſtation, till the veil of favour were rent, grow into uſe, deſerts highly celebrated would often be ſeen to ſink into obſcurity.

LETTER XCIV.

The Mandarin Cham-i-pi, *to the Superintendant of Religion at* Pekin.

Paris.

I Lately went to ſee a convent of black bonzes, which has a public library. Father, ſaid I to the librarian, be ſo kind as to order ſuch a book to be brought to me, naming a piece lately come out. Sir, ſaid he to me in a moſt mild manner, this is the region of the antients; we have ſcarce any correſpondence with the moderns. Why, ſaid I, do not you think them worthy to figure with the *literati* of the firſt ages? To be ſure, anſwered he; and could we come at them, we would give them the firſt rank: but, Sir, thoſe books are very dear; great numbers of them are publiſhed, ſo that the expence mounts high, and our library is not the beſt endowed; for, as to our other revenues, you muſt needs think, we ſhall not go and lay them out in paper: we have better foundations in hand than that of books. Not meeting

meeting with what I wanted in this library, I came away.

This diſappointment turned my thoughts to take a view of the convent. Father, ſaid I to a ſecond bonze, whom I alighted on in a large darkiſh dormitory, will you favour me ſo far as to ſhew me your houſe? Sir, anſwered he coldly, that is not my buſineſs; we keep porters at our gate to dangle after ſtrangers: however, to oblige you, I will comply with your requeſt; follow me. I perceived that the building was very large, but without any thing pleaſing or remarkable, being quite irregular, and in the Gothic taſte.

As we were croſſing a court, I obſerved a large tube raiſed on a wooden ſtand, with one of the ends pointing towards the ſky, and its bore exceeding that of the largeſt ſort of cannon. Pray, ſaid I, what may be the uſe of this tube? It is a teleſcope, ſaid he, contrived by one of our brethren, for bringing the moon almoſt in contact with the earth. That will be very convenient, father; an approximation to that planet has been long ſought after: the aſtronomers muſt hold themſelves extremely obliged to you for ſuch an expence. It is not we that are at the expence, replied the bonze; our revenues have no concern with the ſtars: the expence is the king's, and he has already advanced a conſiderable ſum, without the teleſcope's being ever the more forward. We are indeed under ſome apprehenſion that our learned brother will pay the debt of nature before he has put the finiſhing hand to his work; and thus, after all the charge, the moon will not be an inch nearer us than it was before.

He then led me into the garden. Father, ſaid I to my guide, may I take the liberty to aſk what may be your employment in the convent? Sir, ſaid he, I am one of the order's four chief miniſters of ſtate; my department is its waters and foreſts. I have acceſs, when I please, to the greateſt courtiers at Verſailles, and here at Paris I converſe with the chief men of the army and law. A fine employment truly! ſaid

ſaid I; I did not think there had been any ſuch thing in religious houſes.

There is only one difficulty with me, and that is your age; for, though you are paſt the ſpring of life, you are not in its decline; and I have heard, that it is only through length of years that one attains to the chief monaſtical poſts. But envy, I ſuppoſe, is not known in your ſociety? Envy not known! my God! replied he; envy not known! ay, take my word for it, there's more envy among us than in any court of Europe.

A monk in general, added he, is a phlegmatic, moroſe animal, and without any other buſineſs than to puſh himſelf in his community. The men of the world are often too buſy to be actuated by ambition; whereas the monks, being always idle, are univerſally poſſeſſed with it.

Among us there are two roads to follow, the world and God: the former requires wit, diſcernment, and activity, with a turn for buſineſs; for the ſecond, there needs no more than an habit of retirement, prayer, and contemplation, and a ſort of religious enthuſiaſm, which renders a man unfit for any other thing than devotion.

The latter may lead to heaven; but it leads to nothing among us: I choſe the former, which is the road to diſtinction. I unravelled and reduced into order the affairs of our provincial houſes; I gained law-ſuits, by which they were enriched; I diſtributed incomes to thoſe which had none, and added to thoſe which were too ſcanty: in a word, I had qualified myſelf for my poſt long before it was conferred on me: that's the hiſtory of my promotion.

There are certainly inſtantaneous ſympathies; I immediately took a liking to this bonze, and aſked leave to call upon him ſometimes, which he readily granted, and we ſeparated.

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LETTER XCV.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, *to the Mandarin* Kie-tou-na, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

THE chevalier, who has but little religion himſelf, fancies that all the people, on the other ſide of the line, have none at all; ſo, to convince him that there are other religious nations on the earth, beſides the Chriſtians, I lately gave him an abridgement of our doctrine.

We Chineſe, ſaid I to him, believe that there is a God, the univerſal principle of all things, by whom the heaven and earth, men, plants, and animals, were created.

We believe, that murder is a horrid crime, and that to with-hold the property of another, or what is due to him, is a very bad action.

We believe, that we ſhould not ſlander, nor ſpeak ill of our neighbour.

We believe God to be virtue and wiſdom in the abſtract, that all his qualities are perfections, and all his perfections attributes of his divinity.

We are perſuaded that to pleaſe him men muſt be juſt and equitable, becauſe he loves the good, and hates the wicked.

We are convinced, that nothing in the univerſe is hidden to him; that he knows the ſecrets of hearts, and that his fore-knowledge penetrates through the abyſs of futurity.

We believe, that he is juſt and equitable, that he will reward men's virtues and puniſh their vices.

We believe, that to be in his favour, we muſt obſerve the laws of nature, and the dictates of thoſe divine perſons whom he has ſent for our inſtruction.

We are perſuaded, that the calamities, with which he viſits us, are admonitions to amend our ways; and that theſe evils are ever attended with goodneſs and mercy.

We

We believe, that he chaſtiſes us as a father, and not as a vindictive ſovereign.

We believe, that this Supreme Eſſence directs our actions, yet without any conſtraint put on our free-will; that it is in our power to do good, and that we are not compelled to do evil; that we ought not to attribute our good works to ourſelves, but to him who is the ſpring and fountain of all goodneſs.

We believe, that there is a Providence which conducts the world, and that he, who is the principle of all things, ſuperintends and directs all things, *&c. &c.*

Upon my word, ſaid the chevalier, when I had ended, thoſe are very good things which your people believe: by what I ſee, a ſtep or two more would make Chriſtians of you.

I muſt, however, tell you, that you Chineſe are wanting to your own intereſt in religious matters: why not add to all thoſe articles, the birth, death, and reſurrection of Chriſt? and then, believe me, you would be better Chriſtians than we ourſelves.

LETTER XCVI.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, *to the Mandarin* Cham-pi-pi, *at* Paris.

Loretto.

THERE is a virgin here, to whom the Chriſtians are very much obliged, as, every day, taking from them part of their luxury, ſo that in time there will ſcarce be a jewel to be ſeen in Europe; they will all be in the hands of this mother of God.

Beſides her clothes being all covered with them; ſhe has a private ſhop with an amazing ſtore, called the treaſure of Loretto: it is ſhewn to ſtrangers by a mandarin, who alſo recounts to them the names of the benefactors to this cabinet of curioſities.

There is not a houſe in Europe, ever ſo profane, more ſet off with trinkets, gewgaws, and ſuperfluities, than the *Santa Caſa*.

The

The vanity of heaven will not allow of theſe aſtoniſhing riches to be turned into money, for the relief of the diſtreſſed on earth.

There might be a famine in the country, and all the inhabitants miſerably periſh, before the Madona of Loretto would part with the leaſt of her toys.

This treaſure, inſtead of promoting plenty, is one of the chief cauſes of public wretchedneſs.

The country of Loretto is one of the pooreſt on earth; the people are ſtarving. I have heard that ſeveral attempts have been made for pillaging the holy houſe; and that muſt be the upſhot; for when the people ſhall have nothing leſt, and the mother of God ſhall have all, the only remedy will be to rob

The *Santa Caſa*, is properly Chriſt's houſe, where his mother was delivered of him. At his nativity, it was only a hut, but is now a ſplendid palace.

It ſtood originally ſeven or eight hundred leagues from hence; but not liking its ſituation, it ſet out a travelling, and for more conveniently taking a view of the country, it made ſeveral ſtops, being always carried by angels, who at length, ſet it down on the ſpot from whence I now write to you.

It is wrong in rational people to tack ſuch tales to religion; which ſhould be clear of every appearance of abſurdity, leſt ſtrangers and evil-minded perſons make it a handle for ridiculing the whole.

LETTER XCVII.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, *to the Mandarin* Kie-tou-na, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

WHATEVER genius, or talent, a Frenchman be endowed with, he cannot employ them to the advantage of the ſtate without being of the king's communion. For a citizen to be qualified to ſerve the monarchy and the ſovereign, he muſt profeſs to believe that God is contained in a wafer of an inch diameter.

diameter. Without ſuch a declaration, were he in military abilities equal to Cæſar himſelf, he cannot hold any poſt in the army; nor can the moſt able laywer ever be a judge. *&c.*

It is a moſt groſs overſight, for a government thus to deprive itſelf of its own ſtrength. Thou canſt readily conceive what great qualities muſt lie buried, and capacity be diſtreſſed, as likewiſe what a deficiency of virtues there muſt be in a kingdom which brands with contempt thoſe of its ſubjects, who, conſidering their fewer ſuperſtitions, ſhould be ſuperior to the others: I ſay, fewer ſuperſtitions, becauſe the fewer ceremonies and obſervances with which religion is clogged, the fewer prejudices it leaves in the mind; and this is the very caſe of that worſhip which the laws proſcribe. I do not ſay that the religion of thoſe, here called proteſtants, is better than that of the Roman catholics, but only that it is freer from abſurdities.

The firſt ideas which education impreſſes on men are thoſe relative to religion; and, if theſe be wrong, they tinge the mind with a falſity, which afterwards ſpreads thro' the whole tenor of their conduct. Were I king of France, I would put the proteſtants at the head of political and civil affairs, not becauſe they do not believe in the maſs, but becauſe, being exempt from the multitude of prejudices, they are better qualified to make uſe of their underſtanding.

LETTER XCVIII.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, *to the Mandarin* Champi-pi, *at* Pekin.

Rome.

I Write to thee from a city, which formerly diſturbed the whole globe, and ſtill has a great influence in the world.

There are countries which ſeem to exiſt only to grieve human nature.

This

This capital was formerly the centre of ſtrength; at preſent it is the fixed point of debility.

The Cæſars raiſed it, and the popes have debaſed it; the virtues of the former ſtruck all nations with admiration, and the vices of the latter have ſunk it into univerſal contempt.

I have given thee a repreſentation of the ſee of Rome in my account of its politics, ſo that I ſhall not enlarge any more on this ſubject, as all I ſhould ſay would be only a repetition of what thou already knoweſt; for Rome, ever ſince the eſtabliſhment of the papacy, has always been the ſame. The capital often varied, but the vatican never was known to change: the ſame cauſes, to which it owed its elevation, continue to ſupport it.

I might here give you a delineation of the manners of modern Rome, as the only thing in this city remaining to acquaint thee with: but wickedneſs is here at ſuch a height, that, I fear, a detail of it would affect thee too ſtrongly.

Religion here always gives way to politics: this is the ſpring, cauſe, and effect, of all human actions. Ambition is the image which all the members of the ſacred college fervently worſhip; no body beſtows a thought on being ſincerely virtuous; all the care is to appear ſo.

Treachery, perfidiouſneſs, and villainy, wear religion's livery, and are practiſed under the name of Chriſtian virtues.

The people here are premeditately wicked, and wholly from the intereſt of being ſo.

Voluptuouſneſs, debauchery, and ſenſuality, are dreſſed in violet †; and guilt clothes itſelf in purple. ——But ſo much for this picture, which diſgraces human nature.

† The prelates.

LETTER XCIX.

The Mandarin Cham-pi pi, *to the Superintendant of Religion at* Pekin.

Paris.

THE Chriſtians, if we may judge by appearances, think that God delegates the adminiſtration of the world to his ſaints, and that at preſent the univerſe is governed by deputies.

A Chriſtian, who knows any thing of his religion, never applies to God in his prayers, but has always recourſe to his domeſtics. When a public favour is wanted from heaven, the way they go about it is thus:

The mandarin prieſts appoint public prayers; if prayers fail, they order faſts; and, if theſe prove ineffectual, what is called the Good God is carried about: and when all the premiſſes won't do, a proceſſion is made with images and ſhrines; and this, they ſay never fails.

There is here a female ſaint, called Geneviere, who, I conclude, is directreſs of the waters and woods at Paris. Her buſineſs is, to mind that the city and country be duly watered. Accordingly ſhe is carried in proceſſion, that, with her own eyes, ſhe may ſee the drought, and how wrong it is in God to be ſo long without making it rain; for, in the Chriſtian religion, the ſaints are to repair the leſſer overſights of heaven. This favour the Pariſians never aſk till the laſt extremity, and when there has not been any rain for a long time, which is always a certain reaſon that it will rain ſoon. But to ſecure the miracle, and thus not expoſe their Genevieve's reputation, they ſtay till the weather ſeems quite inclined to rain; and ſo well do they time their meaſures, that it often pours down before the idol has gone thro' half of its proceſſions: at this the people run out of their houſes, proſtrate themſelves before the ſaint's ſhrine, and, with up-lifted hands, cry out, A miracle!

cle! a miracle! What ſayeſt thou of a people ſo induſtrious in fomenting ſuperſtition?

LETTER C.

The Same, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

BESIDES the juridical tribunals, common to every city in France, there is a particular tribunal for the government of Paris, called the Police; it takes cognizance of the order and ſafety of the capital. One inconveniency of this tribunal is, that there is not an honeſt man among all its officers; no-body makes intereſt to get into the police, till he has ſo diſgraced himſelf in the world as not to be admitted into any other ſociety. Its corruption muſt be great indeed, ſince the French, who make ſo light of certain other prejudices, have not yet got over this. A citizen, with the leaſt remains of probity, declines being of the police.

It is univerſally ſaid, that every hand in that court is horribly foul with money taken for palliating the moſt enormous crimes. This iniquitous court has one eye ſhut, and the other open; with one ear it hears all complaints, and with the other it hears none.

Moſt of the tennis-courts, and places of bad reſort, are privileged by this court. The common civil magiſtrate is not to interfere in reſtraining debauchery. It is ſaid, that, if there were no court of police in Paris, its polity would be better. Since this eſtabliſhment licentiouſneſs walks bare-faced. Formerly the vice of fornication ſculked amidſt filth and obſcurity: at preſent, it ſhews itſelf openly; it is warranted by his excellency the lieutenant-general. The laws of the ſtate forbid games of chance, but the police permits them; accordingly there is a great deal of public gaming.

As to the remainder of its adminiſtration, all is natural: the inquiſitors into thefts and robberies collude with

with the thieves and robbers; they, of the department of gaming, agree with the sharpers; and the very officers, for superintending the corruption of women, corrupt them.

But I draw a veil over this sink of ordure, my design not being to give thee a picture of the abomination of desolation at Paris. One particular more shall conclude: all the punishments in this abominable court fall only on poor wretches, who, having not wherewith to pay for their crimes, are good for nothing but to be made examples.

LETTER CI.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, *to the Mandarin* Cham-pi-pi, *at* Paris.

Naples.

NAPLES is a large city, full of inhabitants; but, especially, its buildings are of a striking magnificence, and the pagods so superb, that it is a question who is best lodged, men or their creator.

Luxury and wretchedness are every where seen hand in hand; every house is a medley of riches and poverty; pride and ostentation take the lead of the immediate necessaries of life. At Naples they have so many superfluities, that it is impossible but they must be straitened by real wants.

This city, since the time of the Romans, has successively belonged to several sovereign families, of whom some ruined it, and others have rebuilt it.

It is not long since the spirit of politics had the curiosity to enquire to whom it belonged of real right. Some military geographers, bringing with them a good army into Italy, found that it appertained to the house of Spain, and, accordingly, a son of that crown came and took possession of it: this discovery was made by battering cannon. Spain kept possession of it, till a German geographer, coming with stronger proofs, demonstrated, that the right proprietor of it was the house of Austria.

The

The Neapolitans are said to be the wickedest people on the whole earth; and I believe it: their wickedness must be the greater, as coming from afar: the several governments, to which it has been subject, have infected it with all the vices of the several climates in Europe.

LETTER CII.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, *to the Mandarin* Kie-touna, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

IN France, freedom in love is an established maxim; the engagements of men with women are like treaties between sovereigns, binding no longer than suits with interest: when otherwise, there's an end of the compact.

In Asia, a perjured person, at least, shews some shame for his baseness; but here, perfidiousness is so far from being disgraceful, that they roundly acknowledge it. I here send thee a letter from one of those fickle lovers, who, after a thousand solemn protestations of an eternal love, justifies himself as follows:

"MADAM,

"Don't blame me for loving you no longer, as "herein I only follow that very propensity which "gave birth to my affection. If I promised to love "you for ever, there was a tacit proviso, that you "should be always amiable; for how could I protest "to love eternally what might cease to be an object "of desire? Love is founded on reciprocations of "pleasure; and when one party no longer feels "that pleasure, there must be a cause in the other, "which has put an end to it. In me it cannot be, "as this would be acting against my own interest; "that is, against my pleasure.

"My inconstancy is not a vice inherent in me, but "proceeding from some defect in yourself. When I "loved

" loved you, you had charms and qualities, which " made me think you amiable. Thoſe allurements " muſt no longer exiſt in you, as I now love you no " longer; for had you continued to be what you " really were in my eyes, I ſhould ſtill love you.

" Perhaps you may have done too much for me: " ſome lovers are to be led about through the maze " of hope; on their reaching the ſubmit of their " happineſs they are no longer happy.

" Call me not ungrateful: I ſhould not be want- " ing in gratitude, had you not, deſigning to bind " me to greater gratitude, forced me to be ungrate- " ful".

Thou ſeeſt that the perjured lover is in the right, and that ſhe who ſtood upon conſtancy has wronged herſelf. In Europe indeed the longeſt lover comes off with the worſt. To avoid reproaches of deceit and inconſtancy, the French ſhould love a-pace, and break off with the like diſpatch.

LETTER CIII.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

THE people of France will never get rid of their frenzy for nobility; it ſeems an incurable ca- lenture in them, the commonalty are continually ri- diculing it, and telling ſarcaſtical ſtories of it; yet cannot the commoner behave himſelf like a man in the preſence of a noble: they deſpiſe the nobility in ge- neral, and venerate it in an individual.

Every one knows very well that it is only perſonal qualities which can raiſe the ſoul above the vulgar; that the virtues of the dead cannot dignify the living; that a man is not eſtimable for being iſſued from a long ſeries of anceſtors; and that worm-eaten patents conſtitute but a very ſlender merit; with a hundred ſimilar obſervations: and yet the reſpect paid here to nobility is carried to idolatry.

A no-

A nobleman who can prove his four quarterings, is ſure of bringing to his lure all the rich farmers of the revenue who have marriageable daughters. Amidſt all the droll ſatyrs and paſquinades on their manners and behaviour, the laugher will be always on their ſide. Their parchments will ever attract the whole body of financiers. Let us ſuppoſe a plebeian family for ſeveral generations labouring in the accumulation of wealth: the laſt male deſcendant, having only one daughter, of courſe an immenſe rich heireſs, exults in diſpoſing of her to a nobleman, who, in ſix months time, deſtroys the labour of years. All of the father's claſs, pity the daughter's fate, and continually upbraid the parents for their fooliſh ambition; yet, amidſt all this pity, and whilſt the talk of her misfortune is ſtill freſh in the city, another commoner, ſtill richer, marries his only daughter to a nobleman, with an immenſe portion, which is diſſipated as quickly as the former.

After all, it ought to be ſo in a kingdom where every individual is allowed to prey on the public, and where labour and induſtry acquire the greateſt part of the national wealth: without theſe matches money would be on one ſide, and nobility on the other; the men of birth would be ſo poor, that they could not ſo much as afford to go and be knocked on the head in the field of battle.

Were it not for theſe alliances, France would have only two claſſes, the rich and the poor. It is neceſſary that the plebeians ſhould be always labouring for the idle nobility, and that this ſame nobility ſhould diſtribute the fruits of this labour among the people; otherwiſe the general circulation would ſtagnate. They are two bodies quite incompatible in their opinions, ways, and morals, but whom intereſt often unites.

LETTER CIV.

The Mandarin Chum-pi-pi, *to the Superintendant of Religion at* Pekin.

Paris.

THE Chriſtian religion is extremely myſterious; every part of it is wrapped up in impenetrable ſecrecy. It is not ſo much of its incomprehenſible myſteries that I ſpeak, as of its moſt common uſages. The people in their addreſſes to God make uſe of a language which they don't underſtand. It is only on the word of their mandarins that they know they are praying; and if they do know that they are praying, they generally know nothing of what they are praying for. Chriſtians invoke the Supreme Being in a pagan tongue, that is, in the idiom of an idolatrous ſect; which, in their own opinion, is fitter for offending the Deity, than to be uſed in ſupplications.

I have aſked the reaſon of this unintelligible act of religion, and ſome plauſible reaſons have been given for it. I am told that the Europeans, and the French eſpecially, are ſo indiſcreet, that they would aſk of God things quite out of all reaſon, ſhould they know what they aſk of him.

Were a mother allowed to call on God in the common tongue, ſhe would often pray for the recovery of a ſon, on whom ſhe doates, though unworthy to live: a woman, in the impatience at the abſence of her lover, would trouble the Almighty about haſtening his return, *&c. &c.*

Some ſects there are, however, among Chriſtians, who lay open their wants to God clearly and with underſtanding: theſe are the reformed, as they are called, who, at the time they ſhook off the pope's yoke, aboliſhed ſeveral errors and abuſes which his ſect ſtill adheres to.

LET-

LETTER CV.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, *to the Mandarin* Cotao-yu-ſe, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

IF I omit acquainting thee with the fantaſticalneſs of the French women's dreſſes, it is, that to do it fully, and with any propriety, I muſt have gone through a courſe of experimental phyſics; I muſt have ſtudied the whole ſyſtem of colours, and traced nature in all its ſeveral gradations.

Every woman here is a perfect rainbow, varied from head to foot. Her dreſs is an aſſemblage of roſe colour, violet, purple, and amaranth. The Head of a Pariſian is uſually white, her neck black, her body red, and her feet grey; though the lilac is at preſent the reigning colour. The dreſs of a French woman of Faſhion is a kind of garden with trees and flowers of every ſeaſon. This variety is not confined to plants and fruits; their gowns frequently diſplay houſes and ſtately ſeats: ſome ſhall have cities on their backs, as if they were a map: others, ſtill more ſingular, wear the whole terraqueous globe; Africa on the right ſide, America on the left, and the Torrid Zone before, under the waiſt: others, again prefer an animal gown; that is, diverſified with creatures of all kinds, fiſhes, birds, dogs, cats, rats, crocodiles, lions, wolves, foxes, *&c.* A curious obſerver meets with few women in France, without a monkey in ſome part of her under-petticoat.

LETTER CVI.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, *to the Mandarin* Champi-pi, *at* Paris.

Naples.

NAPLES has no power of its own; its principal ſtrength lies in the diſtance of the large political bodies from it. To come at it by land, the body of the Roman church muſt be trampled on; a profanation which politics deſpiſe too much ever to put in execution: beſides, this ſmall ſtate would be no addition of grandeur, no increaſe of ſtrength to the conqueror. It is too remote from the centre of political action: thus ſafe by its ſituation, it gives itſelf no concern about preventing an invaſion.

Naples has a military force, but no ſoldiers; it being now ſome centuries ſince Italy has turned its thoughts from any thing belonging to war.

All the other methods tending to the aggrandiſement of ſtates are unknown here. They are likewiſe no leſs behind-hand in arts and induſtry, than in political ſchemes.

Some alert and ſenſible miniſters have been very earneſt for repairing the ſhattered parts of this government: great commercial ſchemes have been brought on the carpet; even the Grand Seignior has been talked to; but nothing came to any head.

In moſt of the ſouthern governments in Europe, natural obſtructions impede the advancement of arts. There is no imparting action to a corpſe, or bringing the dead to work; and almoſt all Italy is now buried under the rubbiſh of its luxury and voluptuouſneſs.

At Naples the heat enervates the body; ſo that indolence is a national vice, and monkery completes the lethargy. The bonzes out number all the other citizens; but this heavenly hoſt is a great weakening to earthly ſtrength.

The

The trades-people, farmers, and even artificers, ſhut themſelves up in convents, where they become quite uſeleſs to the commonwealth. And this is a ſloth which the government is not to prevent; they muſt wink at it, ſuch being the king's order.

LETTER CVII.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, *to the Mandarin* Co-tao-yu-ſe, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

THE French drink little or no wine, yet ſo far from any principle of temperance, that it is to promote intemperance: they imagine that liquor gives the ſkin a brown tinge, and hinders the face from appearing agreeable; whereas water whitens the ſkin, and gives it that pale and livid colour, without which a man muſt not hope to be liked by the fair-ſex. This reformation owes its introduction to the women; and herein they agree with the eaſtern legiſlator.

Another inconveniency of wine is its giving a conſiſtency and plumpneſs to the body, which is quite contrary to all the rules of French gallantry; for genuine love here ſhould be almoſt impalpable.

There is no ſetting up for handſomeneſs, without being ſlim, limber, and weak, even to the not having ſix ounces of fleſh on one's bones.

A ſtrong fleſhy man is accounted a coarſe, ill-bred creature: to be in good caſe is only fit for porters and coachmen; the French pretty fellow really is little better than a moving ſkeleton.

And, beſides being meagre and emaciated, he muſt likewiſe be ſick. The preſent mode of gentility by no means allows of a firm ſtate of health: he, who ſhould take on him to be perfectly well, would be but indifferently thought of. It is only the peaſants, and low-lived people, who are ſo prepoſterouſly brought up as to have a good conſtitution: by the genuine

rules of French politeneſs, that of the courtiers and ſops muſt be ſpoiled: eſpecially in high-life, the aſthma is a requiſite quality: a young man without coughing a little durſt not ſhew himſelf in good company.

All the high-flown gallants, at preſent, obſerve the white diet: by the ſame rules of national politeneſs, their ſtomach muſt alſo be exceeding weak; they muſt frequently complain of indigeſtions, and openly proteſt they are irrecoverably gone.

A pretty fellow, who would recommend himſelf to a lady, lives on paſtils, creams, green-peas, and tid bits: eating roaſt-beef for ſupper would diſgrace a man for ever, unleſs, in proof of the weakneſs of his ſtomach, he died the next day of indigeſtion.

The faſhionable gallant, or, as he is called, *the man of the day*, has always half a dozen illneſſes to complain of on emergencies, when he is for ſetting forth the weakneſs of his conſtitution. To ſucceed with the fair-ſex, he muſt have frequently in his mouth the words, *breaſt*, *cold*, *megrim*, *vapours*, and eſpecially *convulſions*, the latter being very common among the Paris belles.

LETTER CVIII.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, *to the Superintendant of Religion at* Pekin.

Paris.

SCARCE any body here keeps himſelf within the limits of his ſtation: not only men, but the very ſaints meddle with what does not concern them.

In the pagods are virgins, by means of whom women bring forth children: the barren implore their influence, that their huſbands may not lie with them in vain: they pray them to ſhed ſo copious a benediction on their nuptial bed, that generation may be the conſequence.

When the miracle has operated, and a woman, before barren, is delivered of a child, ſhe ſends a large

large wax doll to the virgin who conferred fecundity on her. In ſome pagods, you ſee a virgin with twenty children about her. It is, however, ſaid, that this miracle is never brought about between the virgin and the barren woman, but that there is always a third perſon, who performs the miracle. If the fraud be detected, then the virgin image is uſed pretty nearly as we do our idols.

Some time ago an affair happened here, which cauſed a good deal of laughter; and even the warmeſt ſticklers for the miraculous power of images could not keep their countenance.

In a little town, about two leagues from Paris, which has one of theſe fecundating virgins, lives a young married lady, who had in vain implored her for the ſpace of three years, when a captain of dragoons paſſed that way, going to the army. The ſon of Mars was young, gay, and vigorous: he ſpoke, he perſuaded, and he engendered. After his departure, the young lady, perceiving that ſhe was no longer barren, haſtened to the pagod to pray the virgin image to remove her ſterility. Her prayers were heard, and at the end of eight months ſhe was brought to bed of a fine boy. The whole town was all alive about the miracle, admiring the prodigious virtue of the image. The public acclamations were not yet ſubſided, when the captain in his return from the army, paſſed again through this place. He was out of patience to hear that an image enjoyed the fruit of his labours, and robbed him of the glory of this miracle. He immediately repaired to the pagod, and, going up to the virgin's niche, ſpoke to her in this manner.

"It is very odd, lady virgin, that you ſhould aſ-
"ſume to yourſelf an honour due only to me. Pray,
"what did you contribute to the formation of this
"child? Was not the whole coſt mine? Is there a
"ſingle hair on his head which belongs to you?
"Had the young lady, whom I relieved from her
"barrenneſs, gone on invoking you for twenty

" years what would ſhe have been the better? There " muſt be ſomething more than prayers and petitions " to make women bring forth children. Come, Miſs " idol, keep to your own buſineſs; and know fur- " ther, that were it not for your ſex, I would ſmaſh " you all to ſhivers; but honour will not allow a " French officer to lay his hands on a woman."

At theſe words he left the pagod, and went to the young lady, to try whether ſhe was diſpoſed for a ſecond miracle.

LETTER CIX.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

I Am at a loſs, ſaid a Frenchman lately to me, who knows all the defects of the adminiſtration, why our kings delay breaking till they are dead; it would be much better for them and the ſtate to break in their life-time. When a machine is ſo worn that it cannot go as it ſhould, it muſt be ſtopped: to force it into a motion, for which it is no longer fit, is only wearing out its ſprings more and more.

Here is Lewis the Fifteenth, who is ſo hard put to it, that he is now † ſpending the income aſſigned for his ſubſiſtence in the year 1764. He has anticipated his own life: he has eaten up himſelf before the time, ſo that one may ſay he is proviſionally dead. Would it not be better for him to lay the ſtate of his affairs before his people, than ſtay till the terrible increaſe of the diſorder of his affairs reduces him to a remedy, which the ſtate will be too weak to bear the application of? It is ſaid, in excuſe, that the government will loſe its credit: but will it not be much more loſt when this prince ſhall have ruined himſelf irretrievably, and both ſtate and people be involved in his ruin?

I could wiſh, continued he, that there was every ten

† In 1762.

ten years a review of the ſtate of the monarchy, when all its debts ſhould be liquidated. This indeed might, ſometimes, require violent remedies; yet theſe would never do ſo much miſchief as this ſilent file of the public debts, which inſenſibly wears away the government, and reduces it to ſuch a calamitous ſtate, that at length the very remedies become a diſeaſe.

But ſhall I frankly tell you the real ſource of this diſorder? It is not owing to our kings, who generally know nothing of buſineſs, and are, of all others, the laſt informed of what is doing in the kingdom. The fault lies in thoſe wretches the miniſters, whoſe ſtanding maxim it is, to extract the prince's opulence out of indigence. They, as it were, put the monarchy in a preſs, ſqueezing out all the juice they can; and then ſay they, ſee whether the France wants funds. This it is to have genius and underſtanding. Indeed a patriotic miniſter would never have thought of this; they muſt be of a flinty, cruel caſt, ſtrangers to all goodneſs, who can imploy their talents in ſtriking out ſuch oppreſſions.

LETTER CX.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

THERE is a time of the year when the Chriſtians fall away ſtrangely, their pagod allowing them only one meal a day, and that muſt be of light foods, as herbs and fiſh: fleſh they muſt not touch, unleſs they buy a licence for it from the pope, who, even in this appointed ſeaſon of mortifications, can ſell them full power to gratify their appetite.

It is a general penitence preparatory to the public mourning of the nation for the death of Chriſt. That day, called Good Friday, is devoted to ſorrow: but it may properly be called *Wicked Friday*, ſince men, according to what Chriſtians themſelves ſay, committed on that day the moſt horrid of all impieties, putting the Author of Life to death. There

is not a man of any fashion who does not wear black on that day, and shews, in a ridiculous manner, his grief for that sad event.

But, if they eat little in this season of abstinence, they make themselves amends by diversions: besides other shows, all the playhouses are open, and more crowded than at other times.

The more Christian morality is brought to the test, the less consistent it is found.

LETTER CXI.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, *to the Mandarin* Champi-pi, *at* Paris.

Naples.

THE religion at Naples is quite in the Italian way; I mean full of show, superstition, and ridiculous miracles. They have here some of Christ's mother's milk, which liquefies every year on the day of her festival; some of St. Januarius's blood, which boils up when it is wanted so to do; also that of a saint, called John the Baptist, which occasionally does the like; crucifixes, which have spoken, and which are ready to speak again, whenever they have a mind to it; canvas images, which have opened their mouths and expressed themselves as distinctly as reasonable creatures.

Thou must think, that a people, giving credit to so many prodigies, do not believe the greatest of all, which is, the existence of the Supreme Being: and so it is; the greater part here, of those who swallow these miracles, do not believe in God.

Were the Neapolitans to form a paradise, they would give the first place to the virgin's milk; the blood of St. Januarius would have the second; and, perhaps, God might come in for the third. The Romans had worked in this city, for the embellishment of the christian churches, long before Jesus Christ came into the world: the magnificence of the true

true God has been raiſed from the ruins of that of idols, and Chriſtian humility has decked itſelf out in pagan parade and vanity.

As God's houſe at Naples is extremely magnificent, ſo the tombs rival its ſtateline ſs. The bones of the dead are very grandly lodged; ſome corpſes here have manſions three or four ſtories high: King Robert, eſpecially, lies like a king

Though no tombs are to be erected for Chriſtians who do not believe in the maſs; yet they ſhew you, with an air of great gravity, thoſe of the antients who did not believe in God.

LETTER CXII.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, *to the Mandarin* Kie-tou-na, *at* Pekin.

Paris.

I Have mentioned to thee the clubs in this capital, but without ſaying any thing of their police, and form of government, which, like that of ſtates, is three fold.

The firſt is deſpotic, being under a ſultan inveſted with an abſolute power: he orders, and the ſubject pays him immediate obedience: he is the ſupreme law, and any will of his is a command.

It is ſaid, that, in order to attain the turban of the deſpotic club, a member muſt have long devoted himſelf to the whimſies of the female members, muſt have gone through an uneaſy ſervitude under their freaks and caprices; for there is no being maſter here, without having been a ſlave.

The ſecond form is monarchical. This has a kind of king, who is the ſoul of the club: he regulates the diverſions of the whole ſociety; he appoints and ſuperintends balls, plays, and parties of pleaſure; makes matches: and all intrigues are carried on with his privity: he forbids playing deep, checks large expences, dictates the modes of dreſs, takes cognizance of domeſtic affairs, reconciles huſbands to their wives,

wives, adviſes young women againſt their follies, and reproves the coquetries of the elder.

The third is the republican Here the ſubjects are quite free and independent of each other; their ſole buſineſs is to cenſure the government: this has few or no women; for they prefer being under a deſpot, or a king, to a liberty that conſiſts only in ſatyrizing the ſtate Politicians ſay, that the inſtitution of this club is originally Engliſh, as plainly appears, beſides its freedom, from the drinking, and eſpecially from the ſmoking lately introduced.

LETTER CXIII.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

THE other day the chevalier called on me in the forenoon to go and take a walk in the Palais-Royal. After a turn or two we ſat down in a very fine arbour made by nature, and curiouſly embelliſhed by art. Our ſituation enabled us to ſee all the figures of this moving picture: ſo that, if any objects ſtruck me, it was only ſpeaking; for the chevalier, having lived thirty years in the great walk, knows all the company.

Sir, ſaid I, to my companion, pray, who is that tall ambulatory ſkeleton walking by himſelf? never did I ſee a living man more like a corpſe! That walking ſhadow, ſaid he, is a foreign miniſter: his buſineſs at the court of France is a gaming negotiation; for, in Europe, gaming is grown to be a ſtate-affair. This miniſter regularly holds his conferences, which may literally be called ſeſſions. He is ſaid to have a great ſhare of that political ſagacity which accounts for, and calculates the events at chance. Never was any public agent known to be better verſed in the relations, powers, and managements, of the four kings.

He is reckoned the moſt able miniſter in Europe for deciding a refined ſtroke: at Picquet, he is called the

the ornament of the grave; but, however he may decorate a tomb, he ſtrips many a pocket; he has not his equal as a cut-purſe.

His negotiations in France have not been fruitleſs; his addreſs in that branch of politics, which dexterous players find at their fingers ends, has procured him a million of livres.

And who, added I to the chevalier, is that other man, who is juſt come up to him? That is the baron de V———, another gaming negotiator; but not in the miniſtry; he has made the ſword his choice: however, in the manual-policy I have been ſpeaking of, he is not at all interior to the foreign agent.

The conferences or ſeſſions, held by this ſecond negotiator, muſt be of conſequence; for he ſpends very high, keeps opera-girls; and you ſee how richly he is dreſſed; his houſe is fit for a prince, beſides open table, and an equipage of a piece with the reſt; the whole at the expence of thoſe to whom it may appertain.

There's a third making up to them; does he alſo belong to the court of the four kings? Yes, and finds his account in it: he is the baron St. S——, and, having been baniſhed Paris, comes here only at times by the miniſter's leave; ſo that he endeavours to make the moſt of the ſhort intervals allowed him.

What, more ſharpers! cried the chevalier, ſeeing a man coming into the walk, as if they had agreed to meet to be reviewed by us. This creature, ſays he, pointing to a man of a very ordinary appearance, is colonel Sorm—, an Italian: his being here is not owing to him; the head of the police was going to clap him up in the Bicetre for life, when a prince of the blood gave him an excluſive privilege to ſharp in the Temple*.

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* A privileged place in Paris.

LETTER CXIV.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

I Am now on the point of leaving Paris. There are ſtill many things on which I might write to you; for a city aſſuming a new form every day, and, as it were, made up again every four and twenty hours, continually offers freſh matter for reflection.

I may not have fully anſwered the expectations of our court relatively to France; but I have done the utmoſt. There are in every nation a multitude of minute matters, which a foreigner cannot deſcribe: though diſcernible by the eye, they eſcape the imagination; and terms are wanting to expreſs them with any accuracy: he perceives what they are, but is not able to explain them: I fancy they might be called the mechaniſm of ſociety.

But a traveller would know too much, did he know all. Numbers of theſe ſmall matters muſt be left in their inſignificancy.

This is not the laſt letter thou ſhalt receive from me before I embark for England. I have deſired Sin-ho-ei to direct to me to Bruſſels, where I ſhall ſpend ſome days.

LETTER CXV.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, *to the Mandarin* Cham-pi-pi, *at* Paris.

Naples.

NAPLES, of all countries, is the moſt remote from learning The ſciences muſt certainly lie at an infinite diſtance.

The brains of the Neapolitans are quite ſtuffed with ſounds; muſic here is the ſupreme qualification. This people are perpetually quavering and humming tunes. The moſt famous academies here are repoſitories

repoſitories of muſic, where even familiar colloquy is a kind of ſinging, and all the experiments turn on harmony.

The moſt ſkilful of its profeſſors are eunuchs. He, who would diſtinguiſh himſelf in this human ſcience, muſt be deprived of the great characteriſtic of humanity, and for the ſake of pleaſing other men, ceaſe to be a man. Barbarity itſelf is called in for charming the ſenſes, and unnatural cruelties are practiſed to heighten the frivolous delights.

Think not that it is the climate which hinders any great progreſs in the ſciences: compoſitions, which do the greateſt honour to the human mind, have been written in this air. In the Roman times it was the land of literature and knowledge, and, if countenanced by the government, would recover its influence; for the climate in Europe is obſerved never to do any thing of itſelf.

The perfection to which this people has carried harmony is a pretty certain indication of the progreſs it would make in the ſpeculative ſciences; but in this they are cramped by many powerful cauſes; and, whilſt theſe ſhackles are not taken off, the Neapolitan nation will continue in its preſent inferiority. Perhaps one of the greateſt is monkery; it is not for the intereſt of an ignorant body of men that the people ſhould know any thing.

LETTER CXVI.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, *to the Mandarin* Kie-tou-na, *at* Pekin.

Bruſſels.

ALL the way from Paris to Bruſſels does not afford one place worth mentioning; and, inſtead of men, you ſcarce meet with any thing but Flemings.

This country is called Auſtrian Flanders, to diſtinguiſh it from another, named French Flanders. That, where I am at preſent, belongs to the houſe of Auſtria; the principal dominions of which lie two

or

or three hundred leagues from Bruſſels; ſo that, ſhould the prince be inclined to ſee his Flemiſh ſubjects, he muſt aſk half a dozen ſovereigns leave.

It is a very good country, but peace ruins it: war is its harveſt; and France does all it can to keep it perpetually rich, uſually making it the theatre of ſieges and battles.

Every ten years nations muſt meet in Flanders, to cut each other's throats, or the inhabitants would ſtarve: this is owing to the great plenty of proviſions, and the ſcarcity of money. The Fleming, in general, is a dull heavy creature, void of imagination; a kind of animal-machine, acting by habit: he does to-day what he did yeſterday, and will do to-morrow what he does to-day: his chief food is milk and butter; which occaſions a jeſt, that if there were no cows, there would be no Flemings.

They have long been aiming at wit, and perhaps might have reached it had they any genius.

The national religion is that of the pope. Theſe people have the ſame worſhip, the ſame ceremonies, as Rome, and with the like ſuperſtition. They venerate Chriſt, and worſhip the ſaints.

The Low Countries would have a numerous nobility, had not a duke formerly put a great part of them to death; they died in defence of their liberty, which was dearer to them than life. The preſent Flemings, like all the other European people, are habituated to the yoke of ſervitude. Indeed they ſtill ſtand up for their privileges; but theſe only add to their ſlavery.

There ſeems a ſet agreement between this people and the court of Vienna, which is, that the latter is welcome to their money, but muſt not lay a finger on their antient privileges.

Though the Flemings have not the leaſt concern in the northern war, yet are they drained in ſupport of it. The ſums remitted by them into Germany are not eaſily calculated; at leaſt they are ſuch as would ſuffice to make a ſtate very flouriſhing.

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LETTER CXVII.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, *to the Superintendant of Religion at* Pekin.

Bruſſels.

I Lately was witneſs to a very horrible ſight here; nothing leſs than Chriſt himſelf made a priſoner. Twenty ſoldiers, with their bayonets fixed at the end of their pieces, were carrying him to a ſick perſon; the mandarin of the parochial pagod having flatly refuſed to carry him. I muſt let you into the cauſe of the God of the Chriſtians being thus impriſoned, and why the ſoldiery is, at preſent, made a part of this ſect's hierarchy.

About half a century ago, ſome differences ariſing between the Chriſtians, on certain points of their religion, the pope ſent an ordinance enjoining them to believe ſome articles of faith, of which they were not convinced: this mandate was called the conſtitution. Mandarins, bonzes, men and women, all were obliged to ſign what they did not underſtand, and, what is worſe, what they were not perſuaded of. They who would not act againſt their conſcience were ſtript of their ſubſtance, and excommunicated from ſociety. This Remedy only heightened the diſtemper; and the Conſtitution, which was ſuppoſed to be pregnant with peace and concord, ſpread the flame of animoſity, and both parties became more rancorous againſt each other than ever.

The Chriſtian Alcoran was often brought on the carpet, but with this difficulty, that they who were for explaining it to others, did not themſelves underſtand it. Now this was not the way to come to an agreement; and accordingly they did not agree. Beſides innumerable bickerings, ſeveral pitched battles were fought, and the chief weapons on both ſides, were the writings of the primitive fathers, as the philoſophers of this Alcoran are called.

But

But the victory of one party rather the more increaſed the ſtrength of the other: the longer they diſputed, the more they varied; and both ſides made uſe of ſuch ſubtilties, that amidſt their logical refinements they no longer underſtood one another, yet ſtill flamed with all their former animoſity.

One party however got the ſuperiority; Rome and the court bribed it to ſell its faith for emoluments and honours. They who had put their names to the Conſtitution formed a plot againſt the recuſants. The ſubſcribing mandarin biſhops forbid the ſubaltern prieſts to adminiſter certain rites to the ſick, under pretence that *things ſacred are not to be given to dogs.* Chriſt's body was not to be given to them in their laſt moments, without a note certifying that they were good Conſtitutioniſts. The parliament of Paris, which apprehends every thing to be under its cognizance interfered, and baniſhed the refractory mandarins; but to little effect; the refuſals to adminiſter rather increaſed; ſo that, in many caſes, a force was put on the recuſant prieſts, and they were even compelled by a party of ſoldiers to carry Chriſt's body to the ſick.

LETTER CXVIII.

The Mandarin Sin-ho ei, *to the Mandarin* Champi pi, *at* Bruſſels.

Naples.

THE king of Naples has lately left his old ſubjects, to go and govern others; for I muſt acquaint thee, that in Europe the ſovereigns have no particular family. They are ever ready to be the ſovereign of that people who is the moſt opulent and powerful. The father of the national family void of all ſentiment towards his people, but that of intereſt, leaves them when a greater domain offers itſelf elſewhere.

Crowns, in this part of the world, are a matter of barter:

barter: the European princes fight, negotiate, treat, and exchange, with a view of getting the richeſt.

This traffic of crowns cools the affection of ſubjects towards their ſovereign; and how indeed can they have any hearty attachment to a prince, who is no longer theirs, than whilſt no political revolutions call him to a more ſplendid regality? The king of Naples, before his departure for Spain, made a very mortifying avowal: he declared to all Europe, that his eldeſt ſon was an ideot, and conſequently incapable of reigning; and transferred the crown which he was quitting, to another of his children: thus, tho' ſovereigns, by their rank, are ſuperior to the very greateſt perſonages of the ſtate, yet the laws of politics ſometimes reduce them to acknowledgments, which often debaſe them beneath the common claſs of men; and this is no ſmall abatement in grandeur.

LETTER CXIX.

The Mandarin Cham-pi pi, *to the Mandarin* Kie-tou-na, *at* Pekin.

Bruſſels.

THE day after my arrival at Bruſſels, I went to pay my reſpects to prince Charles of Lorraine: it is an honour he allows to almoſt every ſtranger who paſſes through this city. He is governor of the Low Countries; that is, he has a commiſſion from the court of Vienna to be ſovereign in its ſtead; and this commiſſion he in effect transfers to a miniſter, who rules for him; for, in Europe, there are nations who may be ſaid to be governed at the third hand.

This prince is of moſt eaſy acceſs, and all affability; the vanity of ſelf-love is pleaſed at approaching him; his condeſcenſion totally removes the infinite diſtance from his grandeur to the mediocrity of a private perſon, and, in ſome meaſure, reſtores the primitive equality.

What goodneſs any of the great men in Europe have,

have, is only the effect of education; whereas in this prince it is natural. He prevents the cries of diſtreſs; every day of his life is ſtamped with ſome ſignal act of munificence. Were all mankind like prince Charles, half the ſorrows, and all the vices, of human nature would be at an end.

From his highneſs I went to his miniſter, count C———: What a difference between the maſter and ſervant: The latter appeared to me eaten up with pride: he received me with that medley of politeneſs and haughtineſs which places private perſons infinitely below the man in office. He had with him a renegado Capuchin, to whom he was dictating an article to be inſerted in the Bruſſels Gazette: after diſpatching the apoſtate monk, I came in play. He aſked me ſeveral things about the government of China, our trade, our finances, our arts, our ſkill, *&c. &c* but his queſtions were ſuch as ſhewed him to be nothing of a ſtateſman.

He riſes every morning at four o'clock, to learn to have genius; whatever he alights on he reads; and by this application he is at length become very ſuperficial.

Thou mayeſt well think that a man who affects great knowledge, is vain, lofty, and aſſuming: I never ſaw more arrogance. Every thing muſt give way to his will; woe to him who ſhould offer to thwart his ſentiments! he is the very pacha of the Low-Countries.

LETTER CXX.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Bruſſels.

IN thoſe European kingdoms, where nobility muſt be proved to qualify a perſon for a ſeat in aſſemblies which are not noble, and where he muſt have his old parchments ready in proof of his ſixteen quarterings, the uſual entertainment of ſtrangers is the playhouſe,

playhouſe, as here money equally procures entrance to the noble and plebeian.

I went yeſterday to the theatre of this city, where a bad play was acted by bad comedians; however, the houſe was crouded, and the appearances in the boxes very brilliant. It was my good fortune to ſit next to a Frenchman, who having been ſettled at Bruſſels for ſome time, knew moſt of the ſpectators of any figure.

Sir, ſaid I to him, give me leave to aſk you a queſtion or two concerning a few of the principal perſons around us. He returned me a very complaiſant anſwer.

Pray, who is he in the box next to the prince's, viewing the play through a glaſs, and making ſuch hideous wry faces? It is, anſwered he, the prince of Or—. How ſay you! a prince? That's what none but a conjurer would have gueſſed; I am ſure I ſhould have taken him for ſomething very different: really ſome of the great have little of their dignity in their appearance.

In the ſame box, continued I, I perceive ſomething ſcarce perceivable: it may be a man; but if it be, he is but half made. What is it—? It is the duke of D—. He is very little, replied I. But in what ſtation is that Flemiſh ſhrimp? Nothing leſs than governor of the city. He a governor! replied I with ſome ſurpriſe. Yes, he a governor, added he: do you think him unequal to that poſt? I will not go ſo far as that: he may diſcharge it with great honour; but, whatever his abilities are, his figure is none of the moſt promiſing.

Who is that in this box below, on our left, with a face half an ell long? It is the duke of St. A—— a peer of England. And what is he doing at Bruſſels? Doing! why, he is running in debt over head and ears. What need was there of his coming over to Bruſſels for that? the Engliſh nobility I am told, may do the like at home: probably he here ſafely enjoys the ſame privilege? Not ſo very ſafely, for his perſon is threatened. How! ſaid I, arreſt a duke?

No,

No, but it is said that he will be virtually confined; a guard will be set over him, to have an eye to him wherever he goes.

Pray, who is that fop, ogling yonder a young lady in the front box, with such fantastical airs?

That is Count N———, a name highly esteemed, and whose ancestors have gloriously distinguished themselves in the Imperial service: he is out of character there; he should be in the field; but the degenerate wretch prefers amours to fame.

As the reputation and dignity of a house can be maintained only by hereditary virtue, and a series of worthy actions, his father's death may be said to have terminated the nobility of his family, and the meanness of it to be begun in him.

Can you tell me who that young man is in the second box on the left of the prince's? He is an Englishman, who seems to be here only to do honour to his nation, keeping mistresses, dogs, horses, and running footmen. He has gone such a way to work, as in four years time to bring a fine fortune to nothing: six months more, at the like rate, puts an end to all his splendour, and will send him back to London a mere beggar. The woman next to him, with black eyes and flabby cheeks, is a creature who, I dare say, will draw him in to marry her; for the English never play the fool by halves.

Who is that tall young man looking through a glass, as if he were a person of consequence, though by his appearance I should rather take him for a valet de chambre? He is a brother of the nuncio, or Pope's embassador. The coxcomb sets up for a marquis, though his father was only a common tradesman at Milan.

If I am not troublesome in my enquiries, pray who is he that flutters from one lady to another, and takes so much upon him? He is a notary's clerk, whom the French court has thought fit to make its minister here.

One question more, and I have done: who is that person with the blue ribbon on the stage? It is the

L—

L—— reſident. He unqueſtionably, is a nobleman of high rank. He would be; but, unluckily, a little ceremony did not come into his father's mind, when he took his mother to his bed; he forgot to marry her; ſo that the moſt you can make of him is, that he is a noble baſtard.

Really, ſaid I, this court is finely ſet off with miniſters: the beſt born of them is ſcarce a commoner.

LETTER CXXI.

The Mandarin Sin ho-ei, *to the Mandarin* Cham-pi-pi, *at* Bruſſels.

Naples.

THE Neapolitans may be ſaid to live next door to the devils; a ſtep or two brings you to the infernal regions. A few days ſince I went to ſee one of the gates of hell, and the largeſt of any on earth: the country people call it Veſuvius.

It is a burning mountain, almoſt continually venting flames and clouds of ſmoke, ſo as to darken the ſun; and, beſides the danger of being deſtroyed by the flames, they are no leſs expoſed to be ſwallowed up by earthquakes, which here are both frequent and violent. In all parts here abyſſes, ſmoke, and flames, meet your eyes, beſides noxious exhalations, which prove fatal to great numbers of the inhabitants.

The Europeans, as I before obſerved to thee, are unaccountable in their ſettlements; ſome build towns amidſt the tempeſtuous waves, others amidſt ſubterraneous abyſſes; and whilſt the fineſt tracts of the univerſe lie deſert, climates ſhunned even by the wild beaſt are peopled.

LET-

LETTER CXXII.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Bruſſels.

THE day following, I went to the play-houſe at the ſame hour; and who ſhould be the firſt man I ſaw, but he who had ſo complaiſantly ſatisfied my curioſity the night before? I went up to him, and aſking pardon for being ſo troubleſome, renewed my queſtions.

Be ſo kind, Sir, as to tell me who is that lady paſt her bloom, and with no great ſhare of beauty, in the ſecond box, here on our right. It is, anſwered he, the Counteſs of Cop —, a German lady, wife to a miniſter of ſtate: ſhe has ſomething lofty in her look, ſaid I. You need not mince the matter, ſhe is haughty and arrogant—yet ſhe ſeems to have ſome mortification heavy on her heart.—Right, an inward vexation preys on her, and ſhe will never get over it: ſhe was for taking place of the firſt ladies in Bruſſels, till a ducheſs wrote to Vienna, and the court decided that a miniſter's wife ſhould walk after ducheſſes. This precedence, every body judges, is a death's wound to her; for ſuch a public rebuke to the pride of an imperious aſſuming woman, is a ſlow poiſon, which ſoon or late carries her to her grave.

Who is that young lady in blue flowered with ſilver, in one of the front boxes? The princeſs of Or—, anſwered he. Is ſhe a princeſs by birth? No, ſaid he, ſhe purchaſed that title at the expence of her youth and beauty: ſome ſay ſhe paid greatly above its real value; and indeed, to whatever rank a fine woman riſes by ſacrificing her beauty to an old infirm man, I think it a dear purchaſe.

Pray give me ſome account of that handſome lady in the box on our left. That lady, anſwered he, is the ducheſs of A——, a native of France: I know not how it is, ſaid I, but her looks excite two different emotions; the deſires of love ſubſide into the pureſt

pureſt reſpect. And Bruſſels has not a lady, ſaid he, who better maintains her character. She is poſſeſſed of all the female excellencies, without any alloy of their vices: as a woman ſhe may have her foibles; but ſhe has them ſo far under command, that they never break out: which in that ſex, is the grand quality; for from faults none are free; but the point is, to conceal them from obſervation.

And that lady in the box over the ſtage, turned of forty, with a good face but an indifferent ſhape—That is the chancellor's lady, and great are her accompliſhments, and I may ſay her learning and genius; but I wiſh ſhe would recollect, that it is high time to give over love, when ſhe has a daughter fit to fill her place in that ſphere. At Bruſſels, however, as at Paris, that is what mothers take care never to think of. If I am not too troubleſome, pray inform me who that lady is in the ſecond box on the left over the ſtage? That's Madam V——. What lovely eyes ſhe has! ſaid I. Yes, replied he, and to thoſe lovely eyes ſhe owes her ruin: prince Charles is ſaid to have brought them under at many a private interview: ſhe belongs to the houſhold: her huſband is of the bed-chamber to the prince, and ſhe of his bed.

I obſerve two pretty young ladies in the next box: who may they be? They are two ſiſters from Liege, come hither in queſt of a huſband, and cannot ſo much as get a lover. It ſeems to be the fate of ſome beauties, that they ſhall never be married, or ſo much as courted. I give you my word never to trouble you with any more queſtions; only gratify my curioſity about thoſe two young perſons in the ſecond boxes, and between them a woman old in her perſon, in her carriage, and in her garb. That lady dowager, anſwered he, is the relict of a man, who, according to common report, once wore a livery: the two girls are his daughters. The mother has ſcraped together a vaſt fortune only by telling money. No-body viſits them, and the nobility eſpe-

cially take great pleasure in mortifying them on all occasions.

The girls are not slighted for the meanness of their birth, but because they are rich: however, from the very circumstance which draws such contempt on them, they make light of it; besides, they are soon to be married to two substantial financiers of Paris, who are so prudent as to overlook a livery when there is money.

To-morrow I set out for England, from whence I shall immediately write to you on my arrival.

The END of the THIRD VOLUME.